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THE NOVELS
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VICTOR HUGO



VICTOR HUGO

BUG-JARGAL

complexion of a sinister character.—Bug-Jargal, 131.

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This dance, which should convey a sense of joy and pleasure, assumed here a different



PHILADELPHIA
GEORGE BARRIE & SON

This dance, which should consist only of attitudes and movements expressive of joy and pleasure, assumed here a different complexion of a sinister character.—Bug-Jargal, 121.

VICTOR HUGO

BUG-JARGAL

TRANSLATED BY

EUGENIA DE B.



PHILADELPHIA

GEORGE BARRIE & SON

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BUG-JARGAL

1791

In 1818, the author of this book was sixteen ; he wagered that he would write a volume in a fortnight. He made *Bug-Jargal*. Sixteen, that is the age when one gambles on all things and improvises on everything. This book, therefore, was written two years before *Han of Iceland*. And although, seven years later, in 1825, the author had re-touched and re-written a large part, it is none the less, in the main and in many of the details, the first work of the author.

He asks the pardon of his readers, for troubling them with details of so little importance ; but he believes that the small number of persons who like to class by rank of size and by order of birth, the works of a poet, no matter how obscure, will bear no ill will against him for giving them the age of *Bug-Jargal* ; and, as for him, like the travelers who turn in the middle of their road and search to discover in the misty folds of the horizon the place whence they set out, he has wished to give here a memorandum of this

epoch of serenity, audacity and confidence, in which he boldly undertook a subject so immense, the revolt of the negroes of Santo Domingo in 1791, a struggle of giants, a matter in which three worlds were interested, Europe and Africa for combatants, America for the field of battle.

MARCH 24, 1832.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The episode of which you are going to read, whose foundation is borrowed from the revolt of the slaves in Santo Domingo in 1791, has an air of importance which should have sufficed to have prevented the author from publishing it. However, a rough draft of this opusculc having already been printed and a limited number of copies distributed, in 1820, at an epoch when the politics of that day were very little concerned about Hayti, it is evident that, if the subject which he has treated has since taken a new degree of interest, it is not the fault of the author. This is a case in which events have arranged themselves to suit the book, and not the book to suit the events. Be that as it may, the author did not dream of drawing his work from the sort of obscurity in which it was almost buried ; but, warned that a bookseller of the capital proposed to re-print his anonymous sketch, he believed it

his duty to anticipate this re-print by bringing to the light himself his work revised, and, to a certain extent, done over again ; a precaution which preserved his self-esteem as an author from an annoyance, and the bookseller aforesaid from a bad speculation.

Many of the distinguished persons who, either as colonists or as officials, were entangled in the trouble of Santo Domingo having learned of the approaching publication of this episode, have been pleased to communicate spontaneously to the author materials all the more precious in so much that they are almost entirely unpublished. The author wishes to express to them here his lively gratitude. These documents have been peculiarly useful to him in correcting what the story of Captain d'Auverney lacked with respect to local color, and where uncertain relative to historic truth.

Finally, he ought to warn his readers that the story of *Bug-Jargal* is only a fragment of a more extended work which should be composed with the title *Tales Under a Tent*. The author assumes that, during the wars of the revolution, several French officers agreed among themselves to pass their nights in bivouac by each in his turn reciting some one of his adventures. The episode which is herewith published forms a part of this series of

tales ; it may be detached without disadvantage, and, moreover, the work of which it ought to form a part is not finished, never will be, and is not worth the trouble of finishing.

JANUARY, 1826.

I.

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When it came to the turn of Captain Leopold d'Auverney, he opened his eyes in surprise, and assured his comrades that he did not remember a single event of his life that was worthy of their attention.

"But, Captain d'Auverney," said Lieutenant Henri, "you have, however, they say, traveled and seen the world; have you not visited the Antilles, Africa, Italy and Spain. . . . Ah! captain, here is your lame dog!"

D'Auverney started, let fall his cigar and turned quickly to the tent door, at the same instant an enormous dog appeared, limping towards him.

The dog crushed the captain's cigar in passing; the captain paid no attention to it.

The dog licked his feet, wagged his tail, whined and gamboled as well as he was able; then went to sleep before him. The captain, moved and oppressed, mechanically caressed

him with the left hand, undoing with the other the chin-strap of his helmet, repeating from time to time, "Here you are, Rask! here you are!" Then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, at last he exclaimed, "But who has brought you back?"

"With your permission, captain . . ."

For the last few minutes, Sergeant Thaddeus had raised the curtain of the tent, and stood, his right arm hidden in his coat, tears in his eyes, contemplating in silence the conclusion of the Odyssey. At last he risked these words: "With your permission, captain . . ." D'Auverney raised his eyes.

"It is you, Thaddeus; and how the devil have you been able—eh? Poor dog! I thought him in the English camp. Where did you find him then?"

"Thank God! captain, you see me as happy as your little nephew when you declined for him *cornu*, the horn: *cornu*, of the horn . . ."

"But tell me, then, where did you find him?"

"I did not find him, captain; I went to look for him."

The captain rose, and offered his hand to the sergeant, but the sergeant's hand remained in his coat. The captain took no notice.

“It was this way; you see, captain, since poor Rask was lost, I noticed, with your permission, if you please, that you were beside yourself. For all you say, I believe that when he did not come to me in the evening, as usual, to share my ration of bread it would have taken very little to make Thaddeus weep like a child. But no, thank God, I have only wept twice in my life: the first was the day where . . .” and the sergeant cast an uneasy look upon his captain. “The second, when that scamp Balthazar, the corporal of the 7th half brigade, persuaded me to peel a bunch of onions.”

“It seems to me, Thaddeus,” cried Henri, with a laugh, “that you avoid telling us what was the first occasion upon which you shed tears.”

“It was doubtless, old comrade, when you received the roll-call of La Tour d’Auvergne, the first grenadier of France,” said the captain kindly, as he patted Rask’s head.

“No, no, captain; if Sergeant Thaddeus wept, it was when he gave the order to fire on Bug-Jargal, otherwise called Pierrot.”

A cloud gathered on the countenance of d’Auverney. He quickly approached the sergeant and endeavored to clasp his hand; but in spite of the honor the old man still kept his hand hidden under his coat.

"Yes, captain," continued Thaddeus, drawing back a step or two, whilst d'Auverney fixed his eyes upon him with a strange and sorrowful expression. "Yes, I wept that day, and he well deserved it. He was black, it is true, but gunpowder is black also, and—and . . ."

The good sergeant would have wished to follow out his strange comparison. There was something in the idea that pleased him; but he failed to express it, and after having attacked his idea on every side, so to speak, as a general and failed, against a strong place, he raised the siege, and without noticing the smiles of his young officers who listened to him.

"Tell me, captain, do you recollect how that poor negro arrived all out of breath, at the moment when his ten comrades were there? Truly, it was necessary to tie them. It was I who commanded and then he untied them, and took their place, although they did all that they could to dissuade him; but he was inflexible. Ah! what a man! It was a true Gibraltar! And then, captain, he drew himself up as if he were going to enter a ball-room, and the same Rask, his dog, who knew what they were going to do, is here, and who flew at my throat . . ."

"Generally, Thaddeus," interrupted the captain, "you do not let pass this point of

your story, caressing Rask ; see how he looks at you."

"You are right, sir," replied Thaddeus, with embarrassment ; "he looks at me, poor Rask—but the old woman Malajuda told me it was unlucky to pat a dog with the left hand."

"And why not with your right?" asked d'Auverney with surprise, and for the first time noticing the hand reposing in his coat and the pallor spreading on Thad's face.

The sergeant's discomfort appeared to increase.

"With your permission, captain, it is—You have already a lame dog, I fear that you will finish by having also a one-hand sergeant."

The captain continued his siege.

"How? What? What say you, Thaddeus? one-handed! Let me see your arm. One-handed! Great heavens!"

D'Auverney trembled ; the sergeant slowly loosened his cloak and showed to his chief his arm enveloped in a blood-stained handkerchief.

"Ah! my God!" exclaimed the captain, carefully undoing the bandage. "But tell me, old comrade, how this happened."

"Oh! the thing is simple enough. I told you how I had noticed your grief since those

confounded English had taken away your dog, poor Rask, Bug's dog. It was enough . . . I made up my mind to-day to bring him back, even if it cost me my life, so that you might eat a good supper. It was, however, after having told Mathelet, your servant, to brush your full-dress uniform, as we are to go into action to-morrow, I crept quietly out of camp, armed only with my sabre, and crouched under the hedges until I neared the English camp. I had not passed the first trench, when with your permission, captain, in the under-brush on the left, I saw a whole crowd of red soldiers. I crept on quietly to see what they were doing, and as they did not see me in the midst of them I perceived Rask tied to a tree, whilst two of the milords, naked like the heathen, were knocking each other about with their fists, until their bones sounded like the big drum of the regiment. It was these two Englishmen, if you please, who were fighting for your dog. But when Rask caught sight of me, he gave such a bound that the rope broke, and in the twinkling of an eye the rogue was after me. You may believe that the English did not stay behind. I plunged into the woods. Rask followed me. Several balls whistled past my ears. Rask barked, but happily they could not hear him for their shouts of 'French dog! French dog!'

as if Rask was not of the pure Santo Domingo breed. In spite of all I crushed through the thicket, and had almost got clean away, when two red coats confronted me. My sabre accounted for one, and would have rid me of the other, had his pistol not unluckily had a bullet in it. You see my right arm. No matter! 'French dog' leaped at his throat, as if he were an old acquaintance. The Englishman fell, strangled, for the embrace was so tight. Finally, Thad had returned to the camp, and Rask also. My only regret is that the good God will not permit me to go to the battle to-morrow. There!"

The features of the old sergeant were overcast at the idea of not receiving his wound in a battle.

"Thaddeus!" exclaimed the captain in an irritated tone. Then he added gently: "Were you mad enough to expose your life thus for a dog?"

"It was not for a dog, captain, it was for Rask."

D'Auverney's face softened immediately. The sergeant continued: "For Rask, for Bug's dog."

"Enough, enough, old Thad!" cried the captain, putting his hand across his eyes. "Come," added he after a short silence,

"lean on me, and let us go to the ambulance."

Thaddeus obeyed after some resistance. The dog, who, during this scene, had half eaten the bear skin of his master, got up and followed them.

II.

This episode had quickly excited the attention and the curiosity of the joyous spectators.

Captain Leopold d'Auverney was one of those men who, in whatever position the chances of nature and society may place them, always inspire a certain respect mingled with interest. At the first glimpse there was nothing striking in him—his manner was cold, and his look indifferent. The tropical sun, brown-ing his face, had not imparted to him that vivacity of speech and gesture which amongst the Creoles is united to a carelessness often full of grace. D'Auverney spoke little, listened rarely, but showed himself ready to act. Always the first in the saddle, and the last under the tent, he seemed to seek a refuge from his thoughts in bodily fatigue. These thoughts, which had marked his brow with many a premature wrinkle, were not those that you can get rid of by confiding them, nor could they be discussed in idle conversation. Leopold d'Auverney, whose body the hardships of war could not subdue,

seemed to experience a sense of insurmountable fatigue in what is termed the conflict of the feelings. He avoided argument as much as he sought warfare. If at any time he allowed himself to be drawn into a discussion, he would utter a few words full of common sense and reason, and then at the moment of triumph over his antagonist he would stop short, and muttering "What good is it?" would saunter off to the commanding officer to glean what information he could regarding the hour of the charge or of the assault.

His comrades forgave his cold, reserved, and silent habits, because upon every occasion they had found him kind, gentle and benevolent. He had saved many a life at the risk of his own, and they well knew that though his mouth was rarely opened, yet his purse was never closed. They liked him in the army, pardoned him, and in a certain way respected him.

However he was young, many would have guessed him at thirty years of age, but he was some years under it. Although he had for a long period fought in the ranks of the Republican army, they were in ignorance of his former life. The only one to whom, with Rask, he seemed ever to open his heart was Sergeant Thaddeus, who had joined the regiment with him, and would at times speak vaguely of sad events in his early life. They knew

that d'Auverney had undergone great misfortunes in America; that he had been married in Santo Domingo, and that his wife and all his family had perished in those terrible massacres which had marked the revolution in that magnificent colony. At the time of which we write, misfortunes of this kind were so general, that any one could sympathize with, and feel pity for, such sufferers.

They pitied Captain d'Auverney less for his misfortunes than for the manner of his sufferings. That is to say, beneath his icy mask of indifference one could see the traces of the incurably wounded spirit.

From the moment the battle commenced, his face became serene, and in the fight he behaved as if he sought for the rank of general; and as modest after the victory as if he was only a private soldier. His comrades, seeing him thus despise honor and promotion, could not understand what it was that lighted up his countenance with a ray of hope when the action commenced, and they did not for a moment divine that the prize d'Auverney was striving to gain was simply—*Death*.

The Representatives of the People, in one of their missions of the army, had appointed him one day a Chief of Brigade on the field of battle; but he had declined the honor upon learning that it would remove him from

his old comrade Sergeant Thaddeus. Some days afterwards he offered to conduct a dangerous expedition, and returned, against general expectation and his own hope. They heard him regret the rank that he had refused. "For," said he, "since the enemy's guns always spare me, perhaps the guillotine, which ever strikes down those it has raised, would in time have wished for me."

III.

Such was the man upon whom the conversation turned as soon as he had left the tent.

"I would wager," cried Lieutenant Henri, wiping some mud from his boot, left there by the dog as he passed, "I would wager that the captain would not exchange the broken paw of his dog for the ten baskets of Madeira that we caught a glimpse of in the general's wagon."

"Tut ! tut !" cried Aide-de-camp Paschal, gaily, "that would be a bad bargain : the baskets are empty by now, I know something about it, and," added he more seriously, "thirty empty bottles are not of much value, you grant that, lieutenant—the dog's paw would, after all, make a good bell-handle."

* They all laughed at the grave manner in which the *aide-de-camp* pronounced these words. A young officer of the Basque Hus-sars, Alfred, who did not laugh, looked discontented.

"I do not see, gentlemen, any subject for chaff in this matter. This dog and sergeant

who I have always seen near d'Auverney ever since I have known him, seem to me to give rise to some interest. At last this scene . . ."

Paschal, annoyed and displeased with Alfred and the good humor of the others, interrupted him.

"This scene is very sentimental. How then!—a lost dog found, and a broken arm! . . ."

"Captain Paschal, you are wrong," said Henri, throwing an empty bottle outside the tent, "this Bug, otherwise called Pierrot, excites my curiosity greatly."

Paschal, already offended, drowned his anger by remarking that his glass, which he thought empty, was full. D'Auverney returned, and sat down without uttering a word. His manner was still sad, but his face was more calm. He appeared so pre-occupied that he heard nothing about him. Rask, who had followed him, lay down at his feet, but regarded him with a disturbed look.

"Your glass, Captain d'Auverney. Taste this."

"Ah! thank God!" replied the captain, evidently imagining that he was answering Paschal's question, "the wound is not dangerous—the arm is not broken."

The respect which all felt for d'Auverney prevented a burst of laughter.

"Since your mind is at rest regarding Thaddeus' wound," said Henri, "and, as you may remember, we entered into an agreement to pass away the hours of bivouac by relating to each other our adventures, I hope, my dear friend, that you will carry out your promise by telling us the history of your lame dog, and of Bug—I do not know why—otherwise called Pierrot, that regular Gibraltar of a man."

To this request, said in a half-serious, half-jocular tone, d'Auverney did not reply, until all joined in with the lieutenant.

D'Auverney at last yielded.

"I will do what you ask, gentlemen, but you must only expect a very simple tale, in which I play an extremely second-rate part. If the affection that exists between Thaddeus, Rask, and myself leads you to expect anything very wonderful, I fear that you will be greatly disappointed. However, I will begin."

Then there was silence. Paschal emptied his gourd of brandy, and Henri enveloped himself in the half-eaten bear skin to guard against the night wind, whilst Alfred was humming the Galatain air of *mata-perros*.

For a moment d'Auverney relapsed into thought, as though he wished to recall past events which had long since been replaced in his memory by others; but at last, in a low voice and with frequent pauses, he began his tale.

IV

Although born in France, I was sent at an early age to Santo Domingo, to the care of an uncle, a very rich colonist, whose daughter I was to marry.

My uncle's plantations were in the Plains of Acul, near Fort Galifet.

The position of the estate, which no doubt you wonder at my describing so minutely, was one of the causes of all our disasters, and the eventual total ruin of our whole family.

Eight hundred negro slaves cultivated the enormous domains of my uncle. I assure you that the sad condition of these slaves was aggravated by the hardness of their master. My uncle was one of the happily small number of planters from whom despotic power had taken away the gentler feelings of humanity. He was accustomed to see his most trifling command unhesitatingly obeyed, and the slightest delay on the part of his slaves in carrying it out was punished with the harshest severity; whilst the intercession of the children did not allay his anger. We were too often obliged to rest satisfied by secretly

assuaging the injuries which we were powerless to prevent.

"How! fine phrases these!" said Henri, in a whisper, leaning towards his neighbor. "Come, I hope that the captain will not pass over the misfortunes of the half-blacks without some criticisms on the duties of humanity, *et cætera*. He should at least be equal to the Massiac Club."¹

"I thank you, Henri, for saving me from making that mistake," said d'Auverney, coldly, for he had overheard him.

Then he continued:

Amongst the multitude of his slaves, one only had found favor in my uncle's sight; this was a half-caste Spanish dwarf, a *Griffe de couleur*,² who had been given him by Lord Effingham, the Governor of Jamaica. My uncle, who had for many years resided in Brazil, and had adopted the luxurious habits of the Portuguese, loved to surround himself with an establishment that was in keeping with his wealth. A number of slaves dressed in the uniform of European servants gave the house a princely appearance. In order that nothing should be wanting, he had made the slave presented to him by Lord Effingham his fool, in imitation of the feudal lords who had jesters attached to their households. I must say that the choice was singularly happy.

Habibrah, for that was the half-caste's name, was one of those strangely-formed, or, rather, deformed beings, who would be looked upon as monsters if their very hideousness did not cause a laugh. This ill-featured dwarf was short and fat, but moved with wondrous activity upon a pair of slender limbs, which, when he sat down, bent under him like the legs of a spider. His enormous head, covered with a mass of red curly wool, was stuck between his shoulders, whilst his ears were so large that Habibrah's comrades were in the habit of saying that he used them to wipe his eyes when he wept. On his face there was always a grin, which was continually changing its character, and which caused his ugliness to be of an ever-varying description. My uncle was fond of him, because of his extreme hideousness and his inextinguishable gayety. Habibrah was his favorite. Whilst the other slaves were overwhelmed with work Habibrah's sole duty was to carry behind his master a large fan, made of the feathers of the bird of paradise, to keep away the sand-flies and the mosquitoes. My uncle made him eat at his feet on a reed mat, and fed him with tit-bits from his own plate. Habibrah appeared to appreciate all these acts of kindness; he was accustomed to these privileges, and at the slightest sign from my uncle he

would run to him with the agility of a monkey and the docility of a dog.

I did not like this slave. There was something crawling in his servility; and though outdoor slavery does not dishonor, domestic service too often debases. I felt a sentiment of pity for those slaves who toiled in the scorching sun, with scarcely a vestige of clothing to hide their chains; but this deformed clown, this lazy slave, filled me with contempt, with his garments ornamented with gold lace and adorned with bells. Besides, the dwarf never made use of his influence with his master to ameliorate the condition of his fellow-sufferers. He never asked a pardon from his master, who inflicted these chastisements so often; and I heard him once, when he thought that he and his master were alone, urge him to increase his severity towards his ill-fated comrades. The other slaves, however, who ought to have looked upon him with anger and jealousy, did not seem to hate him. He inspired in them a sort of respect which resembled enmity; and when, dressed in all the splendor of laced garments, and a tall pointed cap ornamented with bells and quaint symbols traced upon it in red ink, he walked past their huts, I have heard them murmur in accents of awe, "He is an *obi*,"³

These details, to which I now draw your attention, occupied my mind but little then. I had given myself up entirely to the emotion of a pure love in which nothing else could mingle; a love which was returned me with passion by the girl to whom I was betrothed, and I gave little heed to anyone except Marie. Accustomed from youth to look upon her as my future wife, she who was already like a sister, there was formed between us a tenderness of which no one understood, as I say that our love was a mixture of fraternal devotion, passionate exaltation and conjugal confidence. Few men have spent their earlier years more happily than I have done, few men have felt their souls expand into life in the midst of a delicious climate, with perfect happiness in the present and the brightest hopes for the future. Surrounded from birth with all the contentments of riches, of all the privileges of rank in a country where color is sufficient to give it, passing my days near the being who had all my love, seeing this love favored by my parents, and all that in the age where the blood boiled, in a country where the summer is eternal, where nature is lovely; what more could give me a blind faith in my happy fate? Could I have more to give me the right to say that few men could have spent their earlier years more happily?

The captain paused for a moment, as if these thoughts of bygone happiness had stifled his voice, and then added sadly :

It is true, I have now the right to add that no one could have passed his later ones in more profound misery and affliction.

And as if he had taken new force from his unhappiness, he continued in an assured voice :

V.

In the midst of these blind illusions and hopes, my twentieth birthday approached. It came in the month of August, 1791, and my uncle had decided that this should be the date of my marriage with Marie. You can well understand that the thoughts of happiness, now so near, absorbed all my faculties, and how little notice I took of the political debates with which this colony had been agitated for the past two years. I will not, therefore, speak of the Count de Peinier, or of M. de Blanchelande, the Colonel de Maudit who had such a tragical death. I will not attempt to describe the jealousies of the Provincial House of Assembly of the North, and the Colonial Assembly, which afterwards called itself the General Assembly, declaring that the word "Colonial" had a ring of slavery in it. These miseries which overturned all minds, offered no more interest than the disasters which they produced. For my own part, in this jealousy which divided the Cap and Port au Prince, if I had an opinion this ought to be necessarily in favor of the Cap, as

we were inhabitants of the territory and of the Assembly, of which my uncle was a member.

Only once did I mix myself up in the question of the day. It was on the occasion of the disastrous decree of the 15th of May, 1791, by which the National Assembly of France admitted free men of color to enjoy the same political privileges as the whites. At a ball given at Cap by the Government, many of the younger colonists spoke in impassioned terms of this law, which wounded, so cruelly, the self-respect of the whites, perhaps well founded. I had, as yet, taken no part in the conversation, when I saw approaching the group a wealthy planter whom the whites received merely upon sufferance, and whose color made one suspect his origin. I stepped in front of him, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "Pass on, sir, or you may hear words which would certainly be disagreeable to those with *mixed blood* in their veins."

This insinuation so enraged him that he challenged me. We were both wounded. I confess that I was wrong to have thus provoked him; and it is probable that what one calls *the prejudice of color* was not sufficient to excite me; this man had for some time the audacity to pay certain attentions

to my cousin, and had danced with her the very night upon which I had insulted him.

However, I saw, with enthusiasm, the moment approach when I should possess Marie, and I was a perfect stranger to the state of political ferment in which those around me lived. With eyes fixed on my happiness I did not perceive the frightful storm which already almost covered our political horizon, and which ought, in breaking, root out its existence. The mind, itself the first to be alarmed, did not think of a revolt among the slaves—a class too much despised to be feared ; but there existed, alone, between the whites and the free mulattoes sufficient hatred to cause this volcano, so long suppressed, to break out throughout the colony, which might entail the most disastrous consequences.

During the first days of August a strange incident occurred, which threw a slight shade of uneasiness over the sunshine of my happiness.

VI.

My uncle had on the banks of a little river, which flowed through his estates, a small rustic pavilion in the midst of a clump of trees where Marie went every day to enjoy the sea breeze, which blows regularly in Santo Domingo, even during the hottest months of the year, from sunrise until evening, and whose freshness increases or diminishes with the heat of the day.

I had taken care each morning to adorn this charming retreat with the sweetest flowers that I could gather.

One morning Marie came running to me in a great state of alarm. She had entered, as usual, her leafy retreat, and there she had perceived, with surprise and terror, all the flowers which I had arranged in the morning thrown upon the ground and trampled underfoot; a bunch of wild marigolds, freshly gathered, was placed upon her accustomed seat. She had hardly recovered from her terror when, in the adjoining coppice, she heard the sound of a guitar; then a voice, which was not mine, commenced to sing a song which seemed to

her Spanish, and in which her uneasiness of mind, and without doubt some virgin modesty, had prevented her understanding anything but her name frequently repeated. Then she had taken to flight, and happily he had not prevented her.

This recital filled me with jealousy and indignation. My first suspicions pointed to the mulatto with whom I had fought; but, even in the midst of my perplexity, I resolved to do nothing rashly. I soothed poor Marie and promised to watch over her without ceasing until the time should come when I would be permitted to offer a nearer protection.

Believing that the intruder whose insolence had so alarmed Marie would not content himself with what he had already done, I concealed myself that very evening near the portion of the house in which my betrothed's chamber was after everybody was asleep on the plantation. Hidden amongst the tall stalks of the sugar-cane, and armed with a dagger, I waited. I did not wait in vain. Towards the middle of the night, a melancholy prelude, rising in the silence some steps from me, suddenly awakened my attention. This noise was for me as a challenge; it was a guitar; it was under the very window of Marie's room. Furious with rage, with my dagger clutched firmly in my hand, I rushed

in the direction of the sound, crushing beneath my feet the brittle stalks of the sugar-canes. All of a sudden I felt myself seized and thrown upon my back with what appeared to be super-human force ; my dagger was wrenched from my grasp, and I saw its point shining above my head. At the same moment I could perceive a pair of eyes and a double row of white teeth gleaming through the darkness, whilst a voice, in accents of concentrated rage, muttered, "*Te tengo, te tengo*" (I have you, I have you).

More astonished than frightened, I struggled vainly with my formidable antagonist, and already the point of the dagger had pierced my clothes, when Marie, whom the sound of the guitar and the noise of the struggle had aroused, appeared suddenly at her window. She recognized my voice, saw the gleam of the knife, and uttered a cry of terror and affright. This cry seemed to paralyze the hand of my opponent ; he stopped as if petrified by an enchantment ; but still, as though undecided, he kept the point of the dagger pressed upon my chest, then suddenly threw it away. "No !" said he, this time in French, "No ! she would weep too much !" In ending these odd words, he disappeared in the canes ; and before I could rise, bruised and shaken from the struggle, no sound and no sign remained of his presence or of his flight.

It would be difficult for me to tell that which passed within me from the time I revived from my first stupor in the arms of my sweet Marie, to whom I was so strangely preserved by the one who pretended to claim her. I was more furious than ever with my unknown rival, and was overcome with a feeling of shame at being indebted to him for my life. After all, however, I thought, "it is to Marie that I owe it; for it was the sound of *her* voice that caused him to drop his dagger." However, I could not hide from myself that there was something noble in the sentiment which had caused my unknown rival to spare me. But this rival, what was he then? One supposition after another rose in my mind, all to be discarded in turn. This could not be the mulatto planter to whom my suspicions had first been directed. He was far from having such extraordinary muscular power, and besides, it was not his voice. The man with whom I had a struggle was naked to the waist. Slaves alone went about half-clothed in this manner. But this could not be a slave. The feeling which had caused him to throw away the dagger would not have been found in the bosom of a slave; and besides, my whole soul revolted at the idea of having a slave for a rival. What was to be done? I determined to wait and watch.

VII.

Marie had awakened her old nurse, whom she looked upon almost in the light of her mother, who had died in giving her birth. I remained the rest of the night near her and in the morning we informed my uncle of the mysterious occurrence. His surprise was extreme; but, like me, his pride would not permit him to believe that the unknown lover of his daughter could be a slave. The nurse received the strictest orders from my uncle never to leave Marie alone for a moment; and as the sittings of the Provincial Assembly, the threatening aspect of the affairs of the colony, and the superintendence of the plantation allowed him but little leisure, he authorized me to accompany his daughter whenever she left the house, until the celebration of our nuptials, which was set for the twenty-second of August, and at the same time, presuming that the daring lover must be lurking in the neighborhood, he ordered the boundaries of the plantation to be more strictly guarded than ever, night and day.

These precautions taken, with the consent of my uncle, I determined to put the matter to further proof. I went to the summer-house by the river, and repairing the destruction of the evening before, I placed a quantity of fresh flowers in their accustomed place for Marie.

When the time came that she was accustomed to arrive, I took my loaded rifle, and proposed to escort her to the pavilion. The old nurse followed us.

Marie, to whom I had said nothing about my having set the place to rights, entered the summer-house the first.

"See, Leopold," said she, "my arbor is in the same condition in which I left it yesterday; here are your flowers thrown about in disorder and trampled to pieces; and what astonishes me," added she, taking a bouquet of wild marigolds placed on the bench, "what astonishes me, is that this odious bouquet does not appear at all faded since yesterday. See, dear friend, it looks as if it had been freshly gathered."

I was speechless with rage and surprise. There was my morning's work utterly ruined; and the wild flowers, at whose freshness Marie was so much astonished, had insolently usurped the place of the roses that I had strewn all over the place.

"Calm yourself," said Marie, who noticed my agitation ; "calm yourself, it is a passing thing ; this insolent intruder will come here no more ; let us put all thoughts of him on one side, as I do this nasty bunch of flowers."

I did not care to undeceive her for fear of alarming her : and without telling her that which ought, according to her, *to return no more*, had already returned, I let her, full of innocent indignation, crush the flowers under her foot. Then hoping that the day would come when I should discover my mysterious rival, I made her sit down between her nurse and myself.

Scarcely had we done so than Marie put her finger on my lips ; some sounds deadened by the breeze and the rippling of the stream, had struck upon her ear. I listened ; it was the notes of a guitar, the same melody that had filled me with fury on the previous evening. I made a movement to start from my seat, but a gesture of Marie's detained me.

"Leopold," whispered she, "restrain yourself, he is going to sing perhaps, and without doubt, from what he says, we shall learn who he is."

True enough, a manly plaintive voice came, from the depths of the wood, and mingled with the sad notes of the guitar a Spanish

romance, every word of which has remained deeply engraved on my memory.

“Why dost thou fly before me, Maria? Why dost thou fly from me, girl? Why this terror, when thou hearest me? I am truly formidable! I know how to love, suffer and sing!

“When through the slender branches of the cocoanut trees of the river I see glide thy form light and pure, a brilliancy troubles my sight, oh, Maria! and I believed I saw a spirit!

“And if I hear, oh, Maria! the enchanted accents which escape from thy mouth like a melody, it seems to me that my heart palpitates in my ear—and mingles a plaintive humming with thy harmonious voice.

“Alas! thy voice is sweeter for me than the song of birds who flutter in the heavens and who come from the coast of my country.

“Of my country where I was king, of my country where I was free!

“Free and king, girl! I would forget all that for thee; I would forget all, royalty, family, duties, vengeance, yes, vengeance! although the moment has come to gather this bitter and delicious fruit which ripens so late!”

The voice had sung the preceding verses with sad and frequent pauses; but in finishing these last words, it had taken a terrible accent.

“Oh, Maria! thou resemblest a beautiful palm, slender and upright on its stalks, and which mirrors in the eye of the lover, as the palm in the transparent water of the fountain.

“But, knowest thou not? there is sometimes, in the midst of the desert a hurricane, jealous of the happiness of the fountain of love; it runs, and the air and the sand mix under the flight of heavy wings; it envelopes the tree and the spring in a whirlwind of fire, and seems to shrivel up under the breath of death the green circle of leaves, which had the majesty of a crown and the grace of a cavalier.

“Tremble, oh, white daughter of Hispaniola!⁴ Tremble, lest soon a hurricane breaks over thee as over the desert.

“Then thou wilt regret the love which could have conductedst thou to me, as the joyous katha, the bird of salutation, guides through the sands of Africa the traveler to the oasis.

“And why dost thou repulse my love, Maria? I am king, and my head is raised above all human heads. Thou art white, and I am black; but the day should be united with the night to bring forth the daybreak and the sunset, which are more beautiful than either.”⁵

VIII.

A prolonged sigh on the quivering notes of the guitar accompanied these last words. I was beside myself. "King! black! slave!" A thousand incoherent ideas awakened by this mysterious song which I heard, whirled through my brain. A maddening desire to finish with this unknown being, who dared to mingle the name of Marie with songs of love and menace, took possession of me. I grasped my rifle convulsively and rushed from the summer-house. Marie stretched out her arms to detain me, but I was already in the thicket from which the voice appeared to have come. I searched the little wood thoroughly, I beat the bushes with the barrel of my rifle, I crept behind the trunks of the large trees, and walked through the high grass. Nothing! nothing, and always nothing! This fruitless search joined to the useless reflections on the romance that I had heard, added fuel to my anger. Was this insolent rival always to escape from me like a supernatural being? Could I never find out who he was, or meet him? At this moment, the tinkling of bells

roused me from my reverie. I turned. The dwarf Habibrah was at my side.

"Good-day, master," said he, and he bowed with respect; but with a sidelong glance full of triumphant malice at the anxiety which was imprinted on my face.

"Speak," exclaimed I, roughly, "have you seen any one in these woods?"

"No one except yourself, *señor mio*," answered he, calmly.

"Did you not hear a voice?" continued I.

The slave remained silent, as though seeking an evasive reply.

I was boiling. "Quick!" I exclaimed. "Answer quickly, wretch! did you hear a voice?"

He insolently fixed on me his eyes, round like those of a wild cat.

"*Que quiere decir usted* (What do you mean) by a voice, master? There are voices everywhere—there is the voice of the birds, there is the voice of the stream, there is the voice of the wind in the trees . . ."

I interrupted by shaking him roughly.

"Miserable buffoon, cease using me for your toy, or I will make you listen to another voice which comes from the barrel of my rifle. Answer at once; did you hear in these woods a man singing a Spanish song?"

"Yes, *señor*," answered he, calmly. "Listen, and I will tell you all about it. I was walking on the outskirts of the wood listening to what the silver bells of my *gorra*⁶ were telling me. Suddenly the wind came and joined to this concert some words of a language which you call Spanish. I came nearer to the voice, and I heard the end of a song that I had first heard when my age was counted by months and not by years, and my mother carried me slung at her back in a hammock of red and yellow wool. I love the language, it recalls to me the time when I was little without being a dwarf, a little child and not a buffoon; ah, well."

"Is that all that you have to say?" cried I, impatiently.

"Yes, *hermoso* (handsome) master; but if you like, I can tell you what the man is who sang."

I felt inclined to clasp him in my arms.

"Oh, speak!" I exclaimed; "speak! here is my purse, Habibrah, and ten others fuller than that shall be yours if you tell me what this man is."

He took the purse, opened it, and smiled.

"*Diez bolsas* (ten purses) fuller than this, but, *demonio*! that will make a fine *fanega* of good gold coins; but do not be impatient, young master, I am going to tell you all. Do

you remember, *señor*, the last words of the song, 'You are white, and I am black, but the day should be united with the night to bring forth the daybreak and sunset which are more beautiful than either.' Well, if this song is true, the dwarf Habibrah, your humble slave, born of a negress and a white, *señorito, de amor*, is more beautiful than you, I am the offspring of day and night, I am the daybreak or the sunset of which the Spanish song speaks, and you are nothing but the day. Therefore, I am more beautiful than you, *si usted quiere* (if you please), more beautiful than a white."

The dwarf accompanied this odd rigmarole with bursts of laughter.

I interrupted him again.

"Where, then, do you expect to arrive with these buffooneries? tell me who was singing in the wood."

"Certainly, master," replied the buffoon with a malicious look. "It is evident that *el hombre* (the man) who could sing of such buffooneries, as you call them, is no other than a fool like me! I have gained *las diez bolsas* (the ten purses)."

My hand was raised to chastise his insolence, when a wild shriek rang through the wood from the direction of the summer-house. It was Marie's voice—I darted, I ran, I flew,

wondering what fresh misfortune could be in store for us, and I arrived, out of breath, at the door of the pavilion. A terrible spectacle presented itself to my eyes. An enormous alligator, whose body was half concealed by the reeds and water plants, had thrust his monstrous head through one of the leafy sides of the summer-house ; his hideous widely opened mouth threatened a young negro of colossal height, who with one arm sustained Marie's fainting form, whilst with the other he had plunged the iron portion of a hoe between the sharp and pointed teeth of the monster. The reptile struggled fiercely against the bold and courageous hand that held him at bay. At this moment, as I appeared at the door, Marie uttered a cry of joy, and extricated herself from the negro's arm and threw herself into mine, crying :

“ I am saved ! ”

At Marie's movement and exclamation, the negro turned abruptly, crossed his arms on his breast, and casting a look of infinite sorrow upon my betrothed, remained immovable, without apparently seeing that the alligator was there, near him, having freed itself from the hoe, and was advancing to devour him. He was a courageous negro, and rapidly placing Marie on the knees of her nurse, already seated on a bench and

more dead than alive, I approached the monster and discharged my carbine into its yawning mouth. The animal opened and shut two or three times its bleeding jaws and languid eyes, but this was only a convulsive movement and suddenly it roared, rolled over upon its back, with its scaly feet stiffening in the air. It was dead.

The negro whose life I had so happily preserved turned his head and saw the last convulsive struggles of the monster; then he fixed his eyes on the ground, and, raising them slowly towards Marie, who had again cast herself into my arms, and in the accent of the deepest despair, he said to me :

"Pourque le has matad ?" (Why did you kill him?)

Then he took a long stride without waiting for a reply, and entered the thicket, where he disappeared.

IX.

This terrible scene, its singular conclusion, the emotions of every kind which had preceded, accompanied and followed my vain researches in the wood, had made my brain whirl. Marie was still stupefied from her danger, and some time elapsed before we were able to communicate our incoherent thoughts, otherwise than by looks and clasp-
ing of the hands. At last I broke the silence.

“Come,” said I, “Marie, let us leave this place, some fatality seems attached to it.”

She rose eagerly, as if she had only been waiting for my permission, leaned upon my arm, and we left.

I asked her how it happened that succor had arrived from the negro, when the danger was so imminent, and if she knew who this slave was; for the coarse drawers which covered his nudity showed that he belonged to the lowest class of the inhabitants of the island.

“This man,” replied Marie, “is no doubt one of my father’s negroes who was at work near the river when the appearance of the

alligator made me scream, which warned you of my danger. All I know is, that he rushed out of the wood and came to my help."

"From which side did he come?" asked I.

"From the opposite side from which the song came, and into which you had just gone."

This statement upset the conclusion that I had drawn from the Spanish words that the negro had addressed to me, and from the song in the same language by my unknown rival. Other stories, besides, already presented themselves to me. This negro of great height, powerful muscular development, might well have been the adversary with whom I had struggled on the preceding night. In that case his half-clothed person would furnish a striking proof. The singer in the wood had said: "I am black"—a further proof. He had declared himself to be a king, and this one was only a slave, but I recollected, not without astonishment, the air of severity and majesty printed on his face, though of course accompanied by the characteristic signs of the African race, the brightness of his eyes, the whiteness of his teeth against the shining blackness of his skin, the large forehead surprising on a negro, the scornful swelling which gave to the thickness of his lips and nostrils something

proud and powerful, the nobleness of his courage, the beauty of his form, which, however thin and degraded by fatigue of daily work, had still a development, so to speak, herculean. It seemed to me that there was something imposing in the aspect of this slave, and I said that he would compare very well to a king. Then, recollecting a crowd of other incidents, my conjectures were arrested with a tremble of anger at this insolent negro; I wished to search for him again and chastise him . . . And then all my indecision came back to me. True enough, where was the foundation for so many of my suspicions? The island of Santo Domingo being largely in the possession of the Spanish, it happened that many of the negroes either had originally belonged to the colonists of Santo Domingo, or were born there, mixing the Spanish language with their jargon. And because this slave had addressed to me some Spanish words, was that a reason to suppose him the author of a romance in that language, which showed a cultured mind, according to my ideas, entirely unknown to the negroes? As for this singular reproach which he addressed me for having killed the alligator, he showed in the slave a distaste of the life that his position required, without which he had need, certainly, of having recourse to the

hypothesis of a love impossible for the daughter of his master. His presence in the rustic pavilion could be nothing but accidental ; his force and his height would go a great way to prove his identity with my nocturnal antagonist. Was it on these frail signs that I could place a terrible accusation before my uncle and deliver to the implacable vengeance of his pride, a poor slave who had shown so much courage to save Marie ?

At the moment that these ideas filled my brain, Marie dissipated them entirely by exclaiming, in her gentle voice :

“ My Leopold, we must seek out this brave negro ; without him I should have been lost ! You would have arrived too late.”

These few words had a decisive effect. It did not alter my determination to seek out the slave who had saved Marie, but it entirely altered the design with which I sought him. It was for a punishment ; this is for a recompense.

My uncle learned from me that he owed his daughter's life to one of his slaves, and he promised me his liberty, if I could find him in the crowd of these unfortunate ones.

X.

Up to that time my feelings had restrained me from going into those portions of the plantation where the slaves worked. It was too painful for me to see so much suffering which I could not alleviate. But, on the next day, my uncle asking me to accompany him on his tour of inspection, I accepted with eagerness, hoping to meet amongst the laborers the preserver of my much beloved Marie.

I had the opportunity in this walk of seeing how great a power the master exercises over his slaves, but at the same time I could perceive at what a cost this power was bought. The negroes, trembling at the presence of my uncle redoubled their efforts and activity; but there was hate in this terror.

Irascible by habit, my uncle seemed vexed at being unable to discover any object upon which to vent his wrath, until Habibrah the buffoon, who always followed him, pointed out to him a negro, who overcome by heat and fatigue, was asleep under a clump of date-trees. My uncle stepped quickly up to him, rudely awakened him, and ordered him to

resume his work. The slave, terrified, rose, and in so doing disclosed a Bengal rose-tree upon which he had accidentally laid, and which my uncle took great pleasure in raising. The shrub was destroyed. The master, already irritated at what he called the idleness of his slave, became furious at this sight. Beside himself, he unhooked from his belt the whip with wire plaited thongs, which he always carried with him on his rounds, and raised his arm to strike the negro who had fallen on his knees. The whip did not fall. I shall never forget that moment. A powerful grasp suddenly arrested the hand of the planter. A negro (it was the very one that I was in search of) exclaimed in French :

“Punish me, for I have offended you ; but do not hurt my brother who has but broken your rose-tree.”

This unexpected interposition from the man to whom I owed Marie’s safety, his manner, his look, and the haughty tone of his voice, struck me with surprise. But his generous intervention, far from causing my uncle to blush, only increased the rage of the incensed master, and turned his anger upon the new-comer. My uncle, exasperated, disengaged his arm from the grasp of the tall negro, and pouring out a volley of threats, again raised the whip to strike him. This

time the whip was torn from his hand. The negro broke the handle studded with iron nails as you would break a straw, and cast under his feet this shameful instrument of punishment. I was motionless with surprise, my uncle with rage; it was an unheard-of thing for him to see his authority thus outraged. His eyes appeared ready to start from their sockets; his blue lips trembled. The slave gazed upon him for an instant with a calm air; and then suddenly presented to him with dignity an axe that he held in his hand.

“White man,” said he, “if you wish to strike me, at least take this.”

My uncle, beside himself with rage, would certainly have complied with his request, for he stretched out his hand to grasp the dangerous weapon; when I in my turn interfered. I seized the axe, and threw it into the well of a *noria* (sugar-mill), which was close at hand.

“What have you done?” asked my uncle, angrily.

“I have saved you,” answered I, “from the unhappiness of striking the preserver of your daughter. It is to this slave that you owe Marie; it is the negro to whom you have promised liberty.”

It was an unfortunate moment in which to remind him of his promise. My words could

not soothe the wounded dignity of the planter.

“His liberty!” replied he, savagely. “Yes, he deserves that an end should be put to his slavery. His liberty! we shall see what sort of liberty the members of a court-martial will accord him.”

These menacing words chilled me. In vain did Marie join her entreaties to mine. The negro whose negligence had been the cause of this scene was punished with a severe flogging, whilst the defender was thrown into the dungeons of Fort Galifet, under the terrible accusation of having assaulted a white man. For a slave who did this, it was capital punishment.

XI.

You may judge, gentlemen, how much all these circumstances excited all my curiosity and interest. I made every inquiry regarding the prison. They revealed to me some strange particulars. I learned that all his comrades displayed the greatest respect for the young negro. Slave as he was, he had but to make a sign to be implicitly obeyed. He was not born in the negro houses ; nor did any one know his father or mother ; all that was known of him was that some years ago, a slave ship had brought him to Santo Domingo. This circumstance rendered the influence which he exercised over all his companions the more extraordinary, not excepting black *créoles*, who, as you know, without doubt, gentlemen, profess the greatest contempt for the *Congos* ; an expression which they apply to all slaves brought direct from Africa.

Although he seemed a prey to deep dejection, his enormous strength, combined with his great skill, rendered him very valuable for the cultivation of the plantations. He could turn more quickly, and for a longer period

than a horse, the wheels of the *norias* (sugar-mills). Often in a single day he performed the work of ten of his companions, to save them from the punishment of their negligence or fatigue. He was, also, adored by the slaves; but the respect that they paid him was entirely different from the superstitious dread with which they looked upon Habibrah the jester; it seemed to have something hidden; it was a kind of worship.

What was more strange was his affable, simple bearing with his equals, who felt it an honor to obey him; in strong contrast to the pride and haughtiness which he displayed to the overseers. It is true that these privileged slaves, the intermediary links in the chain of servitude, too often exceed the little brief authority that is delegated to them, and find a cruel pleasure in overwhelming those beneath them with work. It appears, nevertheless, that they could not prevent themselves respecting the sentiment of pride which had induced him to outrage my uncle. Not one of them, had ever dared to inflict any humiliating punishment. If they had done so, twenty negroes would have stepped forward to take his place; and he, immovable, would assist at the performance, as if they were merely performing a duty. This strange man was known throughout the negro quarter as *Pierrot*.

XII.

All these circumstances took a firm hold upon my youthful imagination. Marie, inspired by compassion and gratitude, applauded my enthusiasm, and Pierrot excited our interest so much, that I determined to see him and serve him. I pondered over means of speaking to him.

Although very young, as the nephew of one of the richest colonists in the Cap, I was captain in the Acul Militia. Fort Galifet was confided to their care, and to a detachment of the Yellow Dragoons, whose chief, who was ordinarily an under officer of this company, had the command of the fort; I found that at this time the commander was the brother of a poor planter to whom I had had the good fortune to render an important service, and who was entirely devoted to me . . .

Here the listeners interrupted d'Auverney by guessing Thaddeus.

You are right, gentlemen, replied the captain. You understand, that it was not difficult to obtain from him access to the negro's

cell. As a captain in the militia, I had, of course, the right to visit the fort. However, to evade the suspicions of my uncle, whose rage was still unabated, I took care to go there at the time of his noonday siesta. All the soldiers too, except those on guard, were asleep. Guided by Thaddeus I arrived at the door of the cell; Thaddeus opened it, and then retired. I entered.

The negro was seated, for, on account of his height, he could not stand upright. He was not alone; an enormous dog rose with a growl, and moved toward me. "Rask!" cried the negro. The young dog ceased growling, and again laid down at his master's feet, and began eating some coarse food.

I was in uniform; and the daylight that came through the loophole in the wall of the cell was so feeble that Pierrot could not distinguish who I was.

"I am ready," said he, in a calm voice.

Finishing these words, he partly rose.

"I am ready," he repeated.

"I thought," remarked I, surprised at the ease with which he moved, "I thought that you were in irons."

My voice trembled with emotion. The prisoner did not appear to notice it.

He shoved some pieces towards me with his foot.

“Irons! I have broken them.”

There was something in the tone in which he uttered these words, that seemed to say: *I was not born to wear fetters.* I continued:

“They did not tell me that you were permitted to have a dog.”

“It was I who brought him in.”

I was more and more astonished. The door of the cell was closed on the outside with three bolts. The loophole was scarcely six inches in width, and had two iron bars across it. He seemed to divine my thoughts, and raising as nearly erect as the low roof would permit, he pulled out with ease a large stone placed under the loophole, removed the iron bars, and displayed an opening sufficiently large to permit two men to pass through. This opening looked upon a grove of bananas and cocoanut trees which covered the hill upon which the fort was built.

Surprise rendered me dumb; at that moment a ray of light fell on my face. The prisoner started as if he had accidentally trodden upon a snake, and his head struck against the ceiling of the cell. A strange mixture of opposing feelings, an expression of hatred, kindness and astonishment passed rapidly in his eyes; but recovering himself with an effort, his face once more became cold and calm, and he fixed upon me an indifferent look. He

regarded me as if I was entirely unknown to him.

"I can live two days more without eating," said he.

I made a movement of horror; I saw how thin he had become. He added: "My dog will only eat from my hand, and had I not enlarged the loop-hole, poor Rask would have died of hunger. It is better for it to be me than him, since I am condemned to death."

"No," I said; "no, you shall not die of hunger."

He misunderstood me.

"Without doubt," answered he, with a smile, "I could have lived two days yet without eating; but I am ready, officer; to-day is better than to-morrow; do not hurt Rask."

Then I understood what he meant when he said *I am ready*. Accused of a crime the punishment of which was death, he believed that I had come to announce his immediate execution; and yet this man endowed with herculean strength, with all the avenues of escape open to him, had, in a calm and child-like manner, repeated: *I am ready!*

"Do not hurt Rask," said he, once more.

I could restrain myself no longer.

"What!" I exclaimed, "not only do you take me for your executioner, but you think so

meanly of my humanity, that you believe I would injure this poor dog, who has never done me any harm!"

He paused, then he said, in a changed voice:

"White man," said he, offering me his hand, "white man, pardon me, I love my dog, and," added he after a short silence, "your race have cruelly injured me."

I embraced him, I clasped his hand, I did my best to undeceive him.

"Do you not know me?" said I.

"I knew that you were white, and to the white, though they may be good, a negro is such an insignificant thing; besides you have injured me."

"In what manner?" exclaimed I, in surprise.

"Have you not twice saved my life?"

This strange accusation made me smile. He perceived it, and continued it bitterly:

"Yes, I ought to be glad. You saved me from an alligator, and from a planter, and, what is worse, you have taken from me the right to hate you. I am very unhappy."

The strangeness of his language and of his ideas surprised me no longer; it was in harmony with himself.

"I owe more to you than you can owe to me. I owe you the life of my betrothed Marie."

He started as though he had received some terrible shock.

"*Maria !*" repeated he in stifled tones ; and his head fell into his trembling hands, whilst his bosom rose and fell with heavy sighs.

I confess that once again my suspicions were aroused, but without anger or jealousy. I was too near my happiness, and he too near death, to be like a rival, even had I done so, his forlorn condition would have excited my compassion and sympathy.

At last he raised his head.

"Go," said he ; "do not thank me."

After a pause he added :

"I am not however of a rank inferior to your own."

These words brought ideas to me which roused my curiosity ; I urged him to tell me who he was, and what he had suffered. He maintained an obstinate silence.

My proceedings had touched him, my offers of service and my entreaties appeared to have vanquished his distaste for life. He left his cell, and in a short time returned with some bananas and a large cocoanut. Then he re-closed the opening and began to eat. As we conversed, I remarked that he spoke French and Spanish with equal facility, and that his education had not been entirely neglected.

He knew many Spanish songs, which he sang with great feeling. This man was so inexplicable, from all reports, that the purity of his language had not struck me. I tried, anew to know the cause; he remained silent. At last I left him with regret, after having urged on my faithful Thaddeus to permit him every possible indulgence.

XIII.

Every day at the same hour I saw him. His position rendered me very uneasy, for in spite of all my prayers, my uncle obstinately refused to withdraw his complaint. I did not conceal my fears from Pierrot; he listened to me with indifference.

Often Rask would come in in spite of our being together, with a large palm-leaf tied round his neck. The negro would take it off, read some lines traced upon it in an unknown language, and then tear it up. I had ceased to question him in any matters connected with himself.

One day I entered without his taking notice of me. He was seated with his back to the door of the cell, and was singing in a melancholy tone the Spanish air, *Yo que soy contrabandista* (I who a smuggler am). When he had completed it, he turned sharply round to me, and exclaimed:

“Brother, if you ever doubt me, promise that you will cast aside all suspicion on hearing me sing this air.”

His look was earnest; I promised what he asked, without knowing as to what he meant by these words: *if ever you doubt me*. He took the empty half of a cocoanut which he had brought in on the day of my first visit, and had preserved ever since, filled it with palm wine, begged me to put my lips to it, and then drank it off at a draught. From that day he always called me *brother*.

However I commenced to cherish some hope. My uncle was no longer so irritated. The preparations for the festivities connected with his daughter's wedding had caused his feelings to flow in gentle channels. Marie joined her entreaties to mine. Each day I pointed out to him that Pierrot had had no desire to insult him, but had merely interposed to prevent him from committing an act of perhaps too great severity; that the negro had at the risk of his life saved Marie from certain death; that we owed to him—he his daughter, me my betrothed; and besides, Pierrot was the strongest of all his slaves (for now I sought to save his life, not to obtain his liberty), that he was able to do the work of ten men, and that his single arm was sufficient to put the rollers of a sugar-mill in motion. He listened to me, and once or twice hinted that he might not follow up his complaint.

I did not say a word to the negro of the change in my uncle, hoping that I should announce to him his entire liberty, if I obtained it. What astonished me greatly was, that though he believed that he was under sentence of death, yet he made no effort to avail himself of the means of escape that lay in his power. I spoke to him of this.

“I am forced to remain,” said he coldly, “they would think that I was afraid.”

XIV.

One morning, Marie came to me. She was radiant, and upon her gentle face was a sweeter expression than even the joys of pure love. It was the knowledge of a good deed.

"Listen," said she. "In three days, August 22, we shall be married. We shall soon . . ."

I interrupted her.

"Marie, do not say *soon*, when there is yet three days."

She blushed and smiled.

"Do not be foolish, Leopold," replied she. "An idea has struck me which has made me very happy. You know that yesterday I went to town with my father to buy all sorts of things for our wedding. It is not that I care for jewels and diamonds which do not make me appear more beautiful to you. I would give all the pearls in the world for a single flower from the bouquet which that odious man with the marigolds destroyed; but no matter. My father wished to buy me everything, and I pretended to want them to please him. There was a *basquina* of Chinese satin embroidered with flowers, which I admired. It was very

expensive, but that is singular indeed. My father noticed that the dress had attracted my attention. As we were returning home, I begged him to promise me a boon after the manner of the knights of old—you know how he delights to be compared to them. He vowed on his honor that he would grant me whatever it was. He thought it was the *basquina* of Chinese satin; but no, it is Pierrot's life. This will be my nuptial present."

I could not refrain from embracing this angel in my arms. My uncle's word was sacred; and whilst Marie ran to him to claim its fulfilment, I hastened to Fort Galifet to convey the glad news to Pierrot.

"Brother," exclaimed I, as I entered, "brother! rejoice! your life is saved. Marie has asked it as a wedding present from her father."

The slave shuddered.

"Marie—wedding—my life! How does all this go together?"

"That is very simple," answered I. "Marie, whose life you saved, is to be married."

"To whom?" exclaimed the slave, and his look was wandering and terrible.

"Do you not know?" I replied softly: "To me."

His formidable face became benevolent and resigned.

"Ah! it is true," he replied; "it is to you. And when is the day?"

"On August the 22d."

"On August the 22d—are you crazy?" cried he, with terror and anguish painted on his countenance.

He stopped; I looked at him with astonishment. After a short pause he clasped my hand—

"Brother, I owe you so much that I must give you a warning. Trust to me, take up your residence in Cap, and get married before the 22d."

In vain I entreated him to explain his mysterious words.

"Farewell," said he, with solemnity; "I have perhaps said too much, but I hate ingratitude even more than perjury."

I left him, full of indecisions and uneasiness; which were soon effaced by the thoughts of my happiness.

That very day my uncle withdrew his charge. I returned to the fort to release Pierrot. Thaddeus, knowing him to be free entered with me into the prison. He was not there! Rask finding himself alone, came up to me wagging his tail. To his neck was fastened a palm-leaf; I took it and read these words: "*Thanks; for the third time you have saved my life. Brother, do not*

forget your promise." Underneath, in lieu of signature, the words: "*Yo que soy contrabandista.*"

Thaddeus was even more astonished than I; he was ignorant of the enlargement of the loop-hole, and firmly believed that the negro had changed himself into a dog. I allowed him to remain in this belief, contenting myself with making him promise to say nothing of what he had seen.

I wished to take Rask away. On leaving the fort he plunged into a thicket and disappeared.

XV.

My uncle was furiously enraged at the escape of the slave. He ordered a diligent search to be made for him, and wrote to the governor placing Pierrot entirely at his disposal should he be re-taken.

The 22d of August arrived. My union with Marie was celebrated with pomp at the parish church of Acul. How happily did that day commence from which all our misfortunes were to date ! I was intoxicated with a joy that one does not understand who has not experienced it. I had entirely forgotten Pierrot and his sinister warning. The evening, impatiently waited for, came at last. My young wife had retired to her apartments where I could not follow her as quickly as I should have wished. A fastidious duty, but indispensable, claimed me first. My position as a captain of militia required me that evening to make the round of the guards posted about Acul ; this precaution was absolutely necessary owing to the troubles in the colony, by occasional outbreaks amongst the negroes, which being promptly repressed had taken

place in the month preceding June and July, as well as the first of August, in the plantations of Thibaud and Lagoscette, and especially by the bad dispositions of the free mulattoes, whom the recent execution of the rebel Ogo had exasperated. My uncle was the first to recall me to the recollection of my duty. I had no option but to yield, and, putting on my uniform, I went out. I visited the first few guards without discovering any cause of alarm ; but when towards midnight, as half buried in my own thoughts I was patrolling the shores of the bay, I perceived upon the horizon a ruddy light rising, extending in the direction of Limonade and Saint Louis du Morin. At first the soldiers and I attributed it to some accidental conflagration ; but after a moment the flames became so vivid, the smoke rising before the wind grew so thick, that I ordered an immediate return to the Fort to give the alarm, and to request that help be sent. In passing through the quarters of the negroes who belonged to our estate, I was surprised at the extreme disorder that reigned there. The majority of the slaves were afoot, and were talking together with great earnestness. One strange name, *Bug-Jargal*, pronounced with respect, occurred continually in the almost unintelligible jargon. From a word or two which I gathered here and there, I learned

that the negroes of the northern districts were in open revolt, and had set fire to the dwelling-houses and the plantations on the other side of Cap. Passing through a marshy spot, I discovered a quantity of hatchets and pickaxes hidden in the twigs and (mangliers). Justly suspicious, I immediately put the whole of the Acul militia under arms, and I ordered the inspection of the slaves ; all obeyed calmly.

However, the ravages seemed to grow at every moment and to approach Limbé. It seemed as though one could distinguish the noise of the artillery and fusillade. Towards two o'clock in the morning, my uncle, whom I had awakened, could not remain quiet and ordered me to leave in Acul a part of the militia under the command of a lieutenant ; and, whilst my poor Marie was sleeping or waiting for me, obeying my uncle, who was, as I have mentioned, a member of the Provincial Assembly, I took the road to Cap, with the rest of the soldiers. I shall never forget the appearance of the town as I approached. The flames which devoured the plantation about it, threw a lurid light upon the scene, which was only partially obscured by the clouds of smoke which the wind drove into the narrow streets. Immense masses of sparks rose from the burning heaps of sugar-cane, and fell like fiery snow on the roofs of the houses, and on the

rigging of the vessels at anchor in the roadsteads, at every moment threatening the town of Cap with as serious a conflagration as was already raging in its immediate neighborhood. It was a terrible sight to witness the terror-stricken inhabitants exposing their lives to preserve from so destructive a visitant their habitations, which perhaps was the last portion of property left to them; whilst, on the other hand, the vessels, taking advantage of a fair wind, and fearing the same fate, had already set sail, and were gliding over an ocean reddened by the flames of the conflagration.

XVI.

Stunned by the cannon of the forts, by the cries of the fugitives, and the distant crash of falling buildings, I did not know in what direction to lead my men, when I encountered on the parade-ground the captain of the Yellow Dragoons, who helped to guide us. I will not stop, gentlemen, to describe to you the picture which this lamentable fire presented. Others have painted these first disasters of Cap, and I must pass quickly over these recollections where there was so much fire and blood. I will content myself with saying that the insurgent slaves were, they said, already masters of Dondon, of Terrier-Rouge, of the town of Ouanaminté, and of the unfortunate plantations of Limbé; this filled me with uneasiness, owing to its proximity to Acul.

I made all speed to the house of the governor, M. de Blanchelande. All was in confusion there, including the head of the master. I asked for orders, and begged that instant measures be taken for the security of Acul, which they feared the insurgents had already

threatened. He had with him M. de Rouvray, the Brigadier, and one of the principal landholders in the island, M. de Touzard, the Lieutenant-colonel of the Regiment of Cap, some members of the Colonial and Provincial Assemblies, and several of the leading colonists. As I entered, all were engaged in a confused argument.

“Your Excellency,” said a member of the Provincial Assembly, “it is only too true, these are the slaves, and not the free mulattoes ; we have long predicted it.”

“You make that statement without believing it,” bitterly answered a member of the *Colonial*, otherwise known as the *general*. “You say it to gain credit at our expense ; and you were so far from expecting a real rising of the slaves that these intrigues of your Assembly which in 1789, augured the famous and ridiculous revolt of three thousand slaves on Cap mountain, when there was one national volunteer killed, and that most likely by his own comrades.”

“I repeat,” replied the *Provincial*, “that we can see farther than you. It is simple. We remain here to study the details of the colony, whilst you and your Assembly go to France to make some absurd proposals ; which ends met with the reprimands of the national representation ; *Ridiculus mus !*”

The member of the *Colonial Assembly* answered with a sneer :

“ Our fellow-citizens re-elected us unanimously ! ”

“ It was your Assembly,” retorted the other, “ that caused the execution of that poor devil who neglected to wear a tricolored cockade in a *café*, and who commenced a petition for the mulatto Lacombe which commences by these obsolete words, ‘ In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ! ’ ”

“ It is false,” exclaimed the member of the General Assembly. “ It is the struggle of principles against privileges, of *bossus* and *crochus* ! ”

“ I have always thought it, sir, that you were *Independent*. ”

At this reproach to a member of the Provisional Assembly, his adversary replied with a triumphant air :

“ You confess that you are a *White Cockade* : I leave you under the weight of that confession. ”

The quarrel would have been pushed further, if the governor had not interposed.

“ Ah, gentlemen ! what has this to do with the pressing danger that threatens us ? Advise me, here are reports that I have received. The revolt began this night at ten o’clock amongst the slaves in the Turpin plantation. The

negroes, headed by an English slave named Bouckmann, were joined by the blacks from the plantations of Clément, Trémés, Flaville and Noë. They set fire to all the plantations, and massacred the colonists with the most unheard-of barbarities. I can make you comprehend all the horrors by one single detail. The standard of the insurgents is the body of a white child on the point of a pike."

A cry of horror interrupted M. de Blanchelande.

"So much," continued he, "for what has passed outside. Within, all is confusion. Several inhabitants of Cap have killed their slaves; fear has rendered them cruel. The calmest and bravest have confined their negroes under key. The poor whites' accuse the free mulattoes of being the cause of these disasters. Several mulattoes have come near being victims of the popular fury. I have had to grant them a place of refuge in a church, guarded by a regiment of soldiers. Now, to prove that they have nothing in common with the insurgents, the mulattoes have asked me for a post to defend and some arms."

"Do nothing," cried a voice which I recognized; it was that of the planter suspected of being a mulatto, with whom I had had a duel. "Do nothing, M. le Gouverneur; give no arms to the mulattoes."

“You do not want to fight then?” asked a planter, bruskly.

The other did not appear to hear him, and continued :

“The mulattoes are our worst enemies. Those alone are to be feared. I claim that it is a revolt, their revolt, and not the negroes’. What have the negroes to do with it?”

The poor man hoped by his abuse of the mulattoes to separate himself from them entirely, and then destroy in the minds of the whites, who listened to him, the opinion which threw him out in this despised class. There was too much cowardice in this assemblage for him to succeed. A murmur of disgust rose up on all sides.

“Yes, sir,” said old M. de Rouvray, “yes, the slaves *have* something to do with it, they are forty to three: and we should be in a serious plight if we could only oppose the negroes and the mulattoes with whites like you.”

The planter bit his lips.

“General,” said the governor, “what do you think of the mulattoes’ petition?”

“Give them weapons, governor!” replied M. de Rouvray, “let us make use of every willing hand.” And turning to the colonist of doubtful color, “Do you hear, sir? Go arm yourself.”

The humiliated planter slunk away, filled with concentrated rage.

Meanwhile, the cries of distress which rang through the town reached, from time to time, the governor's house, and recalled to the members of this conference the subject which had brought them together. M. de Blanchelande hastily penciled a few words, and handed it to one of his aides-de-camp, and broke the silence with which the assemblage listened to this frightful murmur.

"Gentlemen, the mulattoes will receive arms; but there remain other questions to be settled."

"The Provincial Assembly should at once be convoked," said the planter who had been speaking when first I entered.

"The Provincial Assembly?" retorted his antagonist of the Colonial Assembly: "what is the Provincial Assembly?"

"Because you are a member of the Colonial Assembly," replied the White Cockade.

The Independent interrupted him.

"I know no more of the Colonial than the Provincial. There is only the General Assembly, do you hear, sir?"

"Ah, well, gentlemen," said the White Cockade, "I say for my part that there is only the National Assembly of Paris."

“Convoke the Provincial Assembly,” laughingly replied the Independent, “as if it was not dissolved the moment that the General Assembly decides to hold its meetings here.”

A universal exclamation broke out in the audience, tired of this odious discussion.

“Gentlemen,” cried a planter, “whilst we are losing time with this nonsense, what is to become of my cotton and my cochineal?”

“And my four hundred thousand plants of indigo at Limbé?” added another.

“And my negroes, for whom I paid thirty dollars a-head all round?” said the captain of a slave ship.

“Each minute that you waste,” continued another colonist, “costs me, watch and tariff in hand, ten quintals of sugar, which at seventeen piastres the quintal makes one hundred and thirty livres, ten sous, in French money.”

“The Colonial, that you call General, usurps!” continued the other disputer, overpowering the tumult of voices; “it remains with Port-au-Prince to fabricate the orders for two leagues of ground and two days’ duration, but that she leaves us alone here. Cap belongs to the Provincial Congress of the North, and only to her!”

“I claim,” continued the Independent, “that his excellency, the governor, has not

the right to convoke any other assembly than the General Assembly of the representatives of the colony, presided over by M. de Cadusch."

"But where is he, your president, M. de Cadusch?" demanded the White Cockade; "where is your assembly? Four members have not yet arrived, whilst the Provincial are all here. Is it that you alone wish to represent an assembly, a whole colony?"

This rivalry of the two deputies, faithful echoes of their respective assemblies, continued until the governor intervened.

"Gentlemen, when will you ever finish your eternal assemblies: *Provincial, General, Colonial, National?* Will you aid the decisions of this assemblage by making it invoke three or four others?"

"Morbleu," said M. de Rouvray in a voice of thunder, striking the table violently, "what accursed talkers! What do we care about these two assemblies which dispute the step like two companies of grenadiers marching to an assault! Ah, well! summon both of them, your excellency and I will form two regiments to march against the negroes; we shall see whether their guns will make as much noise as their tongues."

After this vigorous outburst he turned towards his neighbor (it was I) and whispered:

“What can be done between these two assemblies which claim sovereign rights equal to the king of France? They are fine talkers and advocates who spoil everything here as well as in the capital. If I had the honor of being lieutenant-governor for the king, I would throw all these rascals out of the door. I would say: The king reigns and I govern. I would take the responsibility of sending all these pretended representatives to the devil, and with a dozen Saint Louis crosses, promised in the name of his majesty, I would sweep away all the rebels in the Island of Tortue, formerly inhabited by brigands like these. Note what I say, young man. The *philosophers* have created the *philanthropists*, who produced the *négrophiles*, who are responsible for the *mangeurs de blancs*, who are thus called whilst waiting for a Greek or Latin name. The fictitious liberal ideas which elate all in France, are poison in the tropics. One must treat the negroes with gentleness, but they must not be upset by sudden liberation. All the horrors which you see to-day in Santo Domingo are born in the Massiac Club, and this insurrection of the slaves nothing but the counterpart of the fall of the Bastile.”

Whilst the old soldier thus explained to me his political views, rather narrow-minded, but full of frankness and conviction, the stormy

argument continued. A certain planter, one of the small number who partook of the revolutionary frenzy, and who called himself Citizen-General C——, because he had assisted at a few sanguinary executions, exclaimed :

“We must have punishments rather than battles. Nations wish terrible examples ; let us terrify the negroes ! It was I who quieted the revolt of June and July by lining the approach to my house with fifty slaves’ heads like palms. Let each one join the proposition that I am going to make. Let us defend the entrances to Cap with the slaves who still remain.”

“How ! What imprudence,” was heard on all sides.

“You do not understand me, gentlemen,” replied the Citizen-General. “Let us make a ring of negro heads around the city, from Fort Picolet to Point Caracole. Their insurgent comrades will not dare to approach us. I must sacrifice for the commune cause in a like moment. I dedicate myself first. I have five hundred slaves who have remained faithful—I offer them.”

A movement of horror greeted this proposition.

“Abominable ! Horrible !” cried all.

“Steps of this sort have lost all,” said a planter. “If the execution of the insurgents

of June and July had not been so hurried on, we should have held in our hands the clue to the conspiracy, which the axe of the executioner cut."

Citizen C—— was silenced for a moment by this outburst; then in an injured tone he muttered:

"I did not think of having been suspected of cruelty. I am connected with the négrophiles; I correspond with Briscot and Pruneau de Pomme-Gouge, in France; Hans Sloane, in England; Magaw, in America; Pezll, in Germany; Olivarius, in Denmark; Wadstiohm, in Sweden; Peter Paulus, in Holland; Aven-daño, in Spain; and the Abbé Pierre Tamberini, in Italy."

His voice rose as he ran through the names of the négrophiles. He terminated, saying:

"But, there are no true philosophers here."

For the third time M. de Blanchelande asked if any one had anything further to propose.

"Your Excellency," cried one, "here is my advice, let us embark on board the *Leopard*, which lies at anchor in the harbor."

"Let us put a price on the head of Bouckmann," exclaimed another.

"Send a report of what has taken place to the Governor of Jamaica," suggested a third.

“A good idea, so that he may again ironically send us five hundred muskets!” sneered a member of the Provincial Assembly. “Your Excellency, let us send the news to France, and wait!”

“Wait! Wait!” exclaimed M. de Rouvray; “and do you think that the blacks will wait? And do you think that the flames that encircle your town will wait? M. de Touzard, let the tocsin be sounded, and send dragoons and grenadiers in search of the main body of the rebels. Your Excellency, form a camp in the eastern division of the island; plant military posts at Trou and at Vallières; I will take charge of the plain of Dauphin; I will direct the work; my grandfather who was field master of the Normandie Regiment, has served under Marshal de Vauban; I have studied Folord and Bezout, and I have had some practice in the defense of a country. Besides the plains of Fort Dauphin, nearly surrounded by the sea and the Spanish frontier, have the form of peninsulas and protect themselves; the peninsula of Mole offers a like advantage. Let us use all that, and act; but let us lose no more time, for the moment for action has arrived.”

The positive and energetic speech of the veteran hushed all differences of opinion. The general was right. That secret knowledge

which every one possesses most conducive to his own interests, caused all to support the proposal of General de Rouvray ; and whilst the governor with a warm clasp of the hand showed to the brave officer general, that he appreciated the value of his counsels, even though they had been given as orders, and the importance of his help, all the colonists urged for the immediate carrying out of the proposals.

The two deputies of rival assemblies, alone, seemed to separate from the general adhesion, and murmured the words *encroachment of the executive power, hasty decision and responsibility*.

I seized the opportunity to obtain from M. de Blanchelande the permission that I so ardently desired ; and I left in order to muster my company, to take the road to Acul, in spite of the fatigue which overpowered all, except myself.

XVII.

Day began to break. I was in the market-place waking the soldiers, who were lying on their cloaks, and mingled pell-mell with the Red and Yellow Dragoons, fugitives from the country, cattle, bleating and lowing, and baggage of every description brought into the city by planters. I began to pick out my men from this disorder when I saw a yellow dragoon covered with dust and perspiration, ride up at full speed. I hastened to meet him, and from the few broken words which he uttered, I learned with consternation that my fears were realized ; that the insurrection had spread to Acul, and that the negroes were besieging Fort Galifet, where the militia and the planters had taken refuge. I must tell you that this fort was by no means a strong one, for in Santo Domingo they called any earthwork a fort.

There was not a moment to lose. I mounted as many of my soldiers as I could procure horses for ; and, guided by the dragoon, I reached my uncle's plantation about ten o'clock.

I cast a glance at the enormous estate, which was nothing but a sea of flame, over which hovered huge clouds of smoke, through which every now and then the wind bore trunks of trees covered with sparks. A terrible rustling mingled with the crackling, and the murmurs seemed to reply to the distant yells of the negroes which we already heard without yet seeing them. I only had one thought, and the destruction of all this wealth, which was destined for me, did not distress me, it was the safety of Marie. Marie safe, what mattered anything else? I knew that she had taken refuge in the fort, and I prayed to God that I might arrive in time. This hope alone sustained me in my anxiety, and gave me the strength and courage of a lion.

At length a turn in the road permitted us to see Fort Galifet. The tricolor yet floated on its walls, and a well-sustained fire outlined the contour of its walls. I uttered a shout of joy. "Gallop, spur on ! Loosen the bridles!" cried I to my comrades. And, redoubling our pace, we dashed across the fields in the direction of the fort, from which one could see my uncle's house, doors and windows broken in, but still standing, and red from the conflagration which had not reached it, because the wind blew from the sea and because it was isolated from the plantation.

A crowd of negroes, ambuscaded in this house, showed themselves at this moment at all the windows and on the roof; and the torches, the pikes, the axes, sparkled in the midst of the brisk fire of musketry which was kept up on the fort whilst another crowd of their comrades mounted, fell, mounted again, without ceasing, the besieged walls, which they had charged with shells. The black men always returning repulsed and always springing up again on the gray walls looked like a swarm of ants endeavoring to scale the shell of a tortoise, and shaken off by each movement of the sluggish reptile.

We reached at last the outer works of the fort. With eyes fixed upon the banner which still floated above it, I encouraged my soldiers, in the name of their families, shut like mine within these walls that we were going to assist. A general cheer was the reply, and, forming a column, I was preparing to give the order to charge on the besieging troops.

At this moment a loud yell arose from the enclosure of the fort, and a cloud of smoke enveloped the building rolling several times over the walls, where it escaped like roar of a furnace, and as it cleared away we saw a red flag floating over Fort Galifet. All was over.

XVIII.

I cannot tell you what my feelings were at this terrible spectacle. The fort was taken, its defenders slain, twenty families massacred—all this general disaster; but I confess, to my shame, that I thought not of this. Marie was lost to me ! lost, after having been made mine but a few brief hours before ! Lost, perhaps, through my fault ; if I had not left her the preceding night to go to Cap on the orders of my uncle, I should have been by her side to defend her, or at least to die near her and with her. These thoughts raised my grief to madness, my despair was born of remorse.

Meanwhile, my maddened companions had cried : Vengeance ! and, with sabres between their teeth and pistols in their hand, they burst into the ranks of the victorious insurgents. Although far superior in numbers the negroes fled at their approach, but we could see them on our right and left, before and behind us, slaughtering the whites, and casting fuel on the flames. Our rage was increased by their cowardly conduct.

Through a postern gate, Thaddeus, covered with wounds, presented himself before me. "Captain," said he, "your Pierrot is a sorcerer, an *obi*, as these infernal negroes call him—a devil. We were holding our position; you arrived, and all was saved, when he penetrated into the fort. I do not know how, and see!—As for your uncle, his family, and Madam . . ."

"Marie," interrupted I, "where is Marie?"

At this instant a tall black burst through a blazing hedge, carrying a young woman who shrieked and struggled in his arms. The woman was Marie, the negro was Pierrot!

"Traitor," cried I.

I fired my pistol at him; one of the rebels threw himself in the way, and fell dead. Pierrot turned, and seemed to address a few words to me; then he plunged with his prey into a mass of burning sugar-canes. A moment afterwards a huge dog followed, carrying in his mouth a cradle in which lay my uncle's youngest child. I also recognized the dog; it was Rask. Transported with rage, I fired my second pistol at him; but I missed him.

I followed on their tracks like a madman; but my night march, so many hours spent without taking rest or food, my fears for Marie, the sudden fall from the height of

happiness to the depth of misery, all these emotions of the soul had exhausted me more than the fatigue of the body. After a few steps I staggered ; a cloud seemed to come over me, and I fell senseless.

XIX.

When I revived I was in my uncle's ruined house, supported in the arms of Thaddeus. This faithful Thaddeus gazed upon me with the deepest anxiety.

“Victory!” exclaimed he, as he felt my pulse begin to beat. “Victory! the negroes are routed and my captain has come to life again.”

I interrupted his exclamations of joy by my eternal question :

“Where is Marie?”

I had not yet collected my ideas: the sentiment and not the remembrance of my misfortune remained with me. Thaddeus hung his head. Then my memory returned to me; and like a hideous dream, I recalled the terrible nuptial night, and the tall negro carrying away Marie in his arms through the flames. The frightful fire which had broken out in the colony, and which showed to the whites some enemies in their slaves, and made me see in Pierrot, the good, the generous, and the devoted, who owed his life three times to me, a monster of ingratitude and a rival. The

carrying off of my wife on the very night of our marriage proved to me, what I had at first suspected, and I now knew that the singer in the woods was no other than the ravisher of Marie. What a change in so few hours !

Thaddeus told me that he had vainly pursued Pierrot and his dog ; that the negroes retired, although their number could have easily destroyed my small troop, and that the burning of the property of my family continued, without the possibility of its being arrested.

I asked him if they knew what had become of my uncle in whose room they had taken me. He took my hand in silence, and, leading me to the alcove, drew the curtains.

My unhappy uncle was there, stretched upon his blood-stained couch, with a dagger driven deeply into his heart. By the tranquil expression of his face it was easy to see that the blow had been struck during his sleep. The bed of the dwarf Habibrah, who always slept at the foot of his master's couch, was also stained with gore, and the same crimson traces could be seen upon the laced coat of the poor fool, thrown upon the floor a few paces from the bed.

I did not doubt for a moment that the dwarf had died a victim to his affection for my uncle, and that he had been murdered by

his comrades, perhaps in defending his master. I bitterly reproached myself for the prejudice which had caused me to form so erroneous an estimate of Habibrah and Pierrot; I mingled with my tears for my uncle's untimely end some regrets for the faithful Habibrah.

By my orders his body was carefully searched for, but in vain. I imagined that the negroes had cast the dwarf into the flames; and I gave instructions that, in the funeral service over my uncle's remains, prayers should be said for the repose of the soul of the devoted Habibrah.

XX.

Fort Galifet had been destroyed, our house was in ruins ; a longer sojourn on these ruins was useless and impossible. That same evening we returned to Cap.

There, a severe fever seized me. The effort that I had made to overcome my despair had been too violent. The spring strained too much, snapped. I became delirious. All my deluded hopes, my profaned love, my betrayed friendship, my lost future, and, above all, the implacable jealousy, unbalanced my reason. It seemed as if fire flowed in my veins ; my head seemed ready to burst ; my heart was filled with rage. I pictured to myself Marie in the arms of another lover, subject to the power of a master, of a slave, of Pierrot ! They told me afterwards that I sprang from my bed, and that it took six men to prevent me from dashing out my brains against the wall. Why did I not die then !

This crisis passed. The doctors, the care of Thaddeus, and the latent powers of youth, conquered the malady, this malady which could have proved such an advantage. I

recovered in about ten days, and I did not grieve. I was content to live some time for vengeance.

Hardly convalescent, I went to M. de Blanchelande, to ask for a commission. He wished to give me a post to defend; I begged him to admit me as volunteer in one of the movable columns which were sent out from time to time against the blacks, to sweep the country. Cap had been hastily fortified. The revolt had made terrible progress. The negroes of Port au Prince had begun to show symptoms of disaffection; Biassou commanded those at Limbé, Dondon, and Acul; Jean-François had proclaimed himself generalissimo of the rebels of Maribarou; Bouckmann, who became celebrated later, by his tragic ending while ravaging with his brigands the plains of Limonade; and lastly, the bands of Morne-Rouge had elected for their chief a negro called Bug-Jargal.

The character of the last if report was to be believed, contrasted singularly with the ferocity of the others. Whilst Bouckmann and Biassou invented a thousand methods of death for such prisoners who fell into their hands, Bug-Jargal was always ready to supply them with the means of quitting the island. The former contracted with the markets, with the Spanish rascals, who cruised about the coasts,

and sold to them, in advance, the booty of the unfortunate ones, whom they forced to leave. M. Colas de Maigne, and eight other distinguished colonists, were by his orders released from the wheel where Bouckmann had tried them. Bug-Jargal swept away these corsairs, and other traits of his generosity were cited, which would take too long to repeat.

My hoped-for vengeance did not appear to be near at hand. I could hear nothing of Pierrot. The insurgents commanded by Biassou continued to trouble Cap. They had once dared to approach the hill that commanded the town, and had only been dislodged by the battery from the citadel being directed upon them. The governor determined to drive them into the interior of the island. The militia of Acul, of Limbé, of Ouanaminte, and of Maribarou, joined with the regiment of Cap, and the formidable Red and Yellow companies, formed our active army. The militia of Dondon and Quartier-Dauphin, reënforced by a corps of volunteers, under the command of the merchant Poncignon, composed the garrison of the town.

The governor desired first to free himself from Bug-Jargal, whose incursions alarmed him. He sent against him the militia of Ouanaminte, and a battalion from Cap. This

corps returned two days afterwards, completely beaten. The governor determined to vanquish Bug-Jargal, he divided the same corps with a reënforcement of fifty yellow dragoons and four hundred of the militia of Maribarou. This second expedition was still more abused than the first. Thaddeus, who had taken part in it, was in a violent fury, and upon his return vowed vengeance against the rebel chief Bug-Jargal.

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Tears glistened in d'Auverney's eyes; he crossed his arms on his breast, and appeared to be for a few moments plunged in a melancholy reverie; at length he continued :

XXI.

The news had reached us that Bug-Jargal had left Morne-Rouge, and was moving his troops through the mountains to join Biassou. The governor jumped with joy. "We have them!" cried he, rubbing his hands. The next day the colonial forces were a league from Cap. The insurgents at our approach hastily abandoned Port-Margot and Fort Galifet, where they had established a post defended by large guns captured in one of the batteries on the coast. The governor was triumphant. We continued our march. Each one of us, passing through the arid and desolated plains cast sad looks at the place where his fields, his habitation, his riches had been : often he could not recognize it.

Sometimes our march was interrupted by the conflagration having spread from the lands under cultivation, to the forest and savanna. In these regions, where the land is untilled and the vegetation abundant, the burning of a forest is accompanied with many strange phenomena. One hears in the distance, often before seeing it, a sound like the

rush of a diluvian cataract. The trunks of the trees which break the branches crackle, the roots crack beneath the soil, the tall grass trembles, the lakes and marshes in the forests boil, the hissing of the flames consumes the air, causing a dull sound, sometimes increasing and sometimes diminishing in intensity as the conflagration sweeps on or recedes. Occasionally a glimpse can be caught of a clump of green trees surrounded by a belt of fire, but as yet untouched by the flames. Suddenly, a tongue of fire curls round the stems, and in another instant the whole becomes one mass of golden-colored fire. All burns in time; then a canopy of smoke sinks from time to time under a puff of wind and envelops the flame. It spreads itself out and diminishes, rises and falls, disperses, and thickens, suddenly becomes black; then a sort of fringe of fire quickly cuts the border, a terrible sound is heard, the sparks disappear, and the smoke ascends, disappearing at last in a mass of red ashes, which sink down slowly upon the ground.

XXII

The evening of the third day we entered the ravines of Grande-Riviere ; we calculated that the negro army was some twenty leagues off in the mountains.

We pitched our camp on a low hill, which appears to have served them the same purpose from the manner in which they had dismantled it. This position was not judicious : it is true that we were undisturbed. The hill was commanded on all sides by perpendicular rocks covered with thick forests. The steepness of this cliff had given to this place the name of the *Dompte-Mulatre*. The Grande-Riviere flowed behind our camp : confined between steep banks it was in this place narrow and deep. The steeply inclined banks bristled with clumps of bushes through which nothing could be seen. The waters of the stream itself were frequently concealed by garlands of lianas, which crossed to the maple branches, to red flowers sown among the bushes, mingling the shoots of one bank with the other and recrossing in a thousand ways, forming on the stream a network of verdure. From

the heights of the adjacent hills they appeared like meadows still fresh with dew. A dull sound, or sometimes a wild teal suddenly plunged through the flower-decked curtain, alone showing the course of the river.

The sun soon ceased to gild the crested peaks of the distant mountains of Dondon; little by little darkness spread over the camp, and the silence was only broken by the cry of the crane or by the measured tread of the sentinels.

Suddenly the dreaded war-song of "*Oua-Nassé*" and of "*Camp du Grand-Pré*" were heard above our heads; the palms, the acomas, and the cedars, which crowned the rocks, burst into flames, and the lurid light of the conflagration showed us on the neighboring hills, numerous bands of negroes and mulattoes, whose copper-hued skins glowed red in the firelight. It was the army of Biassou.

The danger was imminent. The officers, aroused from their sleep, endeavored to rally their soldiers. The drum beat to arms the "General Assembly," the bugles sounded the "Alarm." Our lines we formed in confusion, and the insurgents, instead of taking advantage of our disorder, remained motionless, gazing upon us, and singing "*Oua-Nassé*."

A gigantic negro appeared alone on one of the most elevated peaks that overhung the

Grande-Riviere, a flame-colored plume floated on his head ; an axe was in his right hand, a red flag in his left ; I recognized Pierrot. Had a carbine been within my reach my rage would have, perhaps, made me commit a cowardly act. The negro repeated the chorus of "*Oua-Nassé*," planted his flag on the peak, hurled his axe into the midst of our ranks, and plunged into the stream. A feeling of regret arose within me for I hoped to have slain him with my own hand.

Then the negroes began to hurl huge masses of rocks upon us ; a shower of bullets and arrows fell on the hill. Our soldiers, maddened at being unable to reach their adversaries, died in despair, crushed by the rocks, riddled with bullets, or pierced by arrows. Terrible confusion reigned in the army. Suddenly a terrible noise came from the middle of the Grande-Rivière. An extraordinary scene presented itself there. The Yellow Dragoons, who had suffered most from the shower of rocks that the insurgents had pushed over the mountains, had conceived the idea of taking refuge to escape under the thick roof of creepers which grew over the river. Thaddeus was the first to discover this very ingenious place

Here the narrative was suddenly interrupted.

XXIII.

More than a quarter of an hour had elapsed since Thaddeus, his right arm in a sling, had glided without being seen by any one, into the corner of the tent, where his gestures had alone expressed the interest that he took in his captain's narrative ; just at this moment when thinking that respect would not permit such an eulogy without some acknowledgment to d'Auverney, he stammered in a confused tone :

“ You are too good, captain.”

A general burst of laughter arose. D'Auverney, turning, said in a severe tone :

“ What ! you here, Thaddeus?—and your arm ? ”

At this language, so new for him, the features of the old soldier grew dark ; he quivered, and threw back his head, as though to restrain the tears which seemed to struggle to his eyes.

“ I never thought,” said he, in a low voice, “ I never could have thought that captain could offend his old servant by saying *you* to him.”

The captain rose abruptly.

“Pardon, my old friend, pardon, I hardly knew what I said: hold, Thad, thou wilt pardon me?”

Tears sprang to the sergeant’s eyes in spite of himself.

“It is the third time,” remarked he—“but these are tears of joy.”

Peace was made. A short silence ensued.

“But tell me, Thaddeus,” asked d’Auverney, gently, “why hast thou quitted the hospital to come here?”

“It was—with your permission, captain—to ask if I should put the laced saddle-cloth on your charger for to-morrow.”

Henri laughed.

“Thou wouldst have been wiser, Thaddeus, to have asked the surgeon-major if thou shouldst put two ounces of lint on thy sore arm.”

“Or to ask,” continued Paschal, “if you might take a little of wine to refresh yourself; at any rate, here is some brandy, which will do you good; taste it—my brave sergeant.”

Thaddeus advanced, saluted, and, apologizing for taking the glass with his left hand, emptied it to the health of the assembled company. He was cheered.

“You had got, captain, to the moment when—oh, yes, it was I who proposed to take shelter under the creepers, to prevent us Christians from being killed by the rocks.

Our officer, who did not know how to swim, was afraid of being drowned, and, as was natural, was opposed to all his forces, until he saw—with your permission, gentlemen—a great rock fall on the creepers without being able to get through them. ‘It is better,’ said he, ‘to die like Pharaoh in Egypt than like Saint Stephen. We are not saints, and Pharaoh was a soldier like ourselves.’ My officer, a learned man, you see, agreed to my proposal, on the condition that I should first try the experiment myself. I went. I slid down the bank. I jumped under the cradle of branches above, and, zounds! captain, I seemed to be caught by the leg. I struggled, I shouted for help, I received half a dozen sabre cuts, and there were all the dragoons who were like the devils precipitating themselves pell-mell under the creepers. It was the blacks of Morne-Rouge who had hidden themselves there, never for a moment thinking that we should fall right on their backs, as a sack too much charged. That would not have been a good time for fishing! We fought, we swore, we shouted. Being naked, they were more alert than we; but our blows told better than theirs. We swam with one arm and fought with the other, as always practised in like cases. Those who did not know how to swim, say, like my captain.

hung on to the creepers with one hand, and the negroes pulled them by the legs. In the midst of the hullabaloo, I saw a big negro who defended himself like Beelzebub against eight or ten of my comrades; I swam there and I recognized Pierrot, otherwise called Bug . . . but that ought not to be told until afterwards, ought it, captain? I recognized Pierrot. Since the capture of the fort, we were on bad terms; I seized him by the throat; he was going to give me a thrust of his dagger, when he recognized me, and gave himself up instead of killing me; this was very unfortunate, captain, for if he had not surrendered . . . But that will be known later. When the blacks saw him taken, they made a rush at us to give him up; so effective was it that the militia was on the point of entering the water to help us, when Pierrot, seeing, without doubt, that all the negroes would be massacred, said some words which were truly gibberish, then they all took to flight. They plunged into the water and disappeared in a moment. This battle in the water would have been pleasant and very amusing, if I had not lost a finger and wet ten cartridges, and if . . . poor man! but that was to be, captain."

And the sergeant, after having respectfully placed the back of his left hand to

his forage cap, raised it to heaven with an inspired air.

D'Auverney seemed violently agitated.

"Yes," cried he, "thou art right, my old Thaddeus; that was a fatal night."

He would have fallen into one of his usual reveries had the assemblage not urgently pressed him to conclude his story. He continued.

XXIV.

Whilst the scene that Thaddeus had described (Thaddeus, triumphant, placed himself behind the captain), was passing behind the mountain, I had succeeded with some of my men in climbing, by aid of the brushwood, on a peak called Peacock Peak, from the brilliant tints of the mica which coated the surface of the rock. This peak was level with the negroes. The road was soon covered with the militia ; so we commenced a lively fire. The negroes, not so well armed as we were, could not reply as warmly ; they began to grow discouraged ; we redoubled our efforts, and our enemies soon evacuated the neighboring rocks, first hurling the dead bodies of their comrades upon our army, the greater proportion of which was still drawn up on the hill. Then we cut down and bound together with the leaves and fibres of the palms, several enormous cotton trees, of which the first inhabitants of the island made canoes for one hundred rowers. By the aid of this improvised bridge, we crossed over to the abandoned

peaks, and a part of the army thus found themselves advantageously posted. This operation completely quenched the courage of the rebels. Our fire continued. Lamentable shouts, to which were mingled the name of Bug-Jargal, suddenly resounded in the army of Biassou. Great fear manifested itself. Many negroes of the army of Morne-Rouge appeared on the rock upon which the blood-red banner still floated ; they prostrated themselves before it, tore it from its resting-place, and then precipitated it and themselves into the depths of the Grande-Riviere. This seemed to signify that their chief was either killed or a prisoner.

Our confidence had now risen to such a pitch that I resolved to drive the rebels from the rocks they still occupied. I caused a bridge of trees to be thrown between our peak and the nearest rock ; and I was the first to dash into the midst of the negroes. The soldiers were about to follow when one of the rebels with a blow of his axe broke the bridge to atoms. The ruins fell into the abyss and fell on the rocks with a terrible noise.

I turned my head ; in a moment I seemed to be seized by six or seven negroes, who disarmed me. I struggled like a lion ; they bound me with cords made of bark, heedless of the bullets that my soldiers poured upon them.

My despair was somewhat soothed by the cries of victory which I heard around me a moment later; I soon saw the negroes and mulattoes ascending the steep sides of the rocks with all the precipitation of fear, uttering cries of terror. My captors followed their example. The strongest amongst them placed me on his shoulders, and carried me in the direction of the forest, leaping from rock to rock with the agility of a chamois. The flames soon ceased to guide him; the pale rays of the moon was sufficient; he walked less rapidly now.

XXV.

After passing through the thickets, and leaping over the streams, we arrived in a valley situated in the higher part of the hills, of a singularly wild and savage appearance. This spot was absolutely unknown to me.

This valley was situated in the heart of the hills, called in Santo Domingo the *Double Mountains*. It was a large green plain, imprisoned by walls of bare rocks, and dotted with clumps of pines, indian wood, and palm-trees. The extreme cold which reigned almost continually in this part of the island, although it never freezes, was still increased by the freshness of the night, which was scarcely finished. The day was commencing to break and showed the whiteness of the surrounding summits, and the valley, still plunged in darkness, was only lighted by flashes from the negroes' fires ; for this spot was their headquarters. The shattered remains of their army had begun to reassemble. Every now and then bands of negroes and mulattoes arrived, uttering groans of distress and cries of rage. New fires were speedily lighted, and the camp began to increase in size.

The negro whose prisoner I was had placed me at the foot of an oak, whence I surveyed this strange spectacle with entire carelessness. The black had bound me with his belt to the trunk of the tree, against which I was leaning, and carefully tightening the knots in the cords which impeded my movements, he placed on my head his own red woolen cap, as if to indicate that I was his property, and after making sure that I could not escape or be carried off by others, he prepared to leave me. I determined to address him, and I asked him in the Creole dialect if he belonged to the band of Dondon, or of Morne-Rouge. He stopped at once, and in a tone of pride replied, "Morne-Rouge !" An idea came to me. I had often heard of the generosity of the chief Bug-Jargal, and though I had made up my mind that death would soon end all my troubles, yet the thought of the tortures that would inevitably precede it should I fall into the hands of Biassou, filled me with horror. I wanted to ask to be put to death without these tortures. It was perhaps a weakness, but I believe at such a time a man's nature revolts at such a death. I thought then, that if I could be taken from Biassou, I might obtain from Bug-Jargal a death without supplication, a soldier's death. I therefore asked the Morne-Rouge negro to lead me to

his chief, Bug-Jargal. He started. "Bug-Jargal!" he repeated, striking on his forehead in anguish; then, as if rage had suddenly overtaken him, he cried, shaking his fist, "Biassou! Biassou!" After this menacing name he left me.

The mingled rage and grief of the negro recalled to my mind the events of the day, and the certainty we had acquired of either the death or capture of the chief of the band of Morne-Rouge. I felt that all hope was over, and resigned myself to the threatened vengeance of Biassou.

XXVI.

Meanwhile darkness still covered the valley where the crowd of blacks and the number of fires increased without ceasing. A group of negresses came near me to light a fire. By the numerous bracelets of blue, red, and violet glass which ornamented their arms and ankles, by the rings which weighed down their ears and adorned their toes and fingers, by the amulets on their bosoms and the collar of charms suspended round their necks, and by the aprons of variegated feathers, sole covering of their nudity, and above all, by their outcry, their vague and haggard look, I recognized them as *griotes*. You are perhaps ignorant that there exists amongst the African blacks, a class with a rude talent for poetry and improvisation which approaches closely to madness. These negroes, wandering from one kingdom to another, are in these barbarian countries looked upon as the ancient rhapsodists, and in the modern age the same as the minstrels of England, the *minnesingers* of Germany, and the troubadours of France. They are called *griots*. Their wives the

griotes, possessed like them with an insane genius, accompany the barbaric songs of their husbands with lascivious dances, and form a grotesque parody on the *nautch* girls of India and the *almées* of Egypt. It was some of these women who came and sat in a circle, a few feet from me, their legs crossed under them according to the African custom, and their hideous faces lighted up by the red light of a fire of withered branches.

When they had formed a complete circle they all took hands, and the eldest, who had a heron's plume stuck in her hair, began to exclaim "*Ouanga !*" I at once understood that they were going through one of their performances of witchcraft which they designate under that name. They all repeated: *Ouanga !* The eldest, after a moment's silence, pulled out a handful of her hair and threw it into the fire, crying out these sacramental words: "*Malé o quiab !*" which in the jargon of the Creoles means, "I shall go to the devil." All the *griotes* imitated their leader, and throwing locks of their hair into the fire, repeated gravely, "*Malé o quiab !*"

This strange innovation, and the extraordinary grimaces that accompanied it, caused me to burst into one of those hysterical fits of laughter which often seize the most serious man or one who is deeply grieved, and is

called hysterical laughter. It was in vain that I endeavored to restrain it; it would have vent. This laugh which escaped from so sad a heart, brought about a gloomy and terrifying scene.

Disturbed in their incantations, all the negresses arose as one is startled from sleep. They had not noticed me until then. They rushed tumultuously toward me, screaming: "*Blanco! Blanco!*" I have never seen so hideous a collection of faces as these were in their passion, with their white teeth, and their eyes almost starting from their heads.

They were about to tear me to pieces. The old woman with the heron's plume made a sign, and exclaimed several times: "*Zoté cordé! Zoté cordé!*" (Do you agree?) The wretched creatures stopped at once, and I saw them, not without surprise, tear off their feather aprons, throw them upon the ground, and commence the lascivious dance which the negroes call *La chica*.

This dance, which should consist only of attitudes and movements expressive of joy and pleasure, assumed here a different complexion of a sinister character. The dreadful looks which the *griotes* cast upon me in the midst of their playful evolutions, the lugubrious accent which they gave to the joyous air of *La chica*, the sharp and prolonged moan which the

venerable president of the black Sanhedrim gave from time to time to her *balafo*, a sort of spinnet, which sounds like a little organ, and is composed of twenty wooden pipes, gradually diminishing in size, and, above all, the horrible laugh with which each of the naked sorceresses, in certain pauses of the dance, thrusting her face close to mine, greeted me in turn, showed only too clearly the horrible punishment that awaited the *blanco* (white man) who had profaned the mysteries of their *Ouanga*. I recollected that savage nations had a custom of dancing round the victims that they were about to sacrifice, and I patiently awaited the conclusion of the performance which I knew would be sealed with my blood. However, I could not repress a shudder when I saw at a moment indicated by the *balafo*, each *griote* thrust into the fire the point of a sabre, or the blade of an axe, a long sail-maker's needle, a pair of pincers, or the teeth of a saw.

The dance was approaching its conclusion ; the instruments of torture were red. At a signal from the old woman, the negresses marched in line, one after the other, to look for some horrible implement in the fire.

Those who had none furnished themselves with a blazing stick. Then I understood

clearly what my punishment was to be, and that I should find an executioner in each dancer. At another command from their leader they commenced the last figure, wailing in a frightful manner. I closed my eyes that I might not see the frantic evolutions of these female demons, who panting from fatigue and rage, clashed the red-hot weapons over their heads in measured cadence, from which came a sharp noise and myriads of sparks. I waited, nerving myself for the moment when I should feel my flesh quiver in agony, my bones calcine, and my muscles writhe under the burning tortures of the nippers and the saws, and a shiver ran through my body. It was a frightful moment.

Fortunately it did not last long. The *griotes* reached the end of *La chica*, when in the distance I heard the voice of the negro who had made me prisoner. He was running and shouting: "*Que haceis, mujeres, de demonio? Que haceis alli? Dexais mi prisionero!*" (What are you doing, woman of the devil? What are you doing there? Leave my prisoner alone!) I opened my eyes again. It was already broad daylight. The negro hurried with a thousand angry gestures. The *griotes* paused, but they seemed less influenced by the threats of my captor than by the presence of a strange-looking

person by whom the negro was accompanied.

It was a very stout and very short man—a species of dwarf—whose face was entirely concealed by a white veil, pierced with three holes, for the eyes and mouth, after the manner of the penitents. This veil, which fell on his neck and shoulders, left naked his hairy breast, which appeared to me to be the same color as that of a half-caste, and upon which hung a golden chain bearing the sun of a mutilated silver monstrance. One could see the cross-hilt of a heavy dagger peep from his scarlet belt, which also supported a kind of petticoat striped with green, yellow, and black, the hem of which hung down to his large and ill-shaped feet. His arms were bare like his breast, a white staff, a rosary of adrezarach, of which the beads were suspended from his belt, close to the dagger, and his head was surmounted by a cap adorned with bells, in which, when he approached, I was not surprised in recognizing the *gorra* of Habibrah. Amongst the hieroglyphics with which it was covered, one could see many spots of gore. It was, without doubt, the blood of the faithful fool. These traces of murder gave me fresh proofs of his death, and awakened in my heart a feeling of regret.

Directly the *griotes* recognized the wearer of Habibrah's cap, they cried out all at once, "*The Obi !*" and prostrated themselves. I guessed at once that this was a sorcerer attached to Biassou's force. "*Basta ! basta !*" ("That's enough ! That's enough !") said he, with a grave and solemn voice, coming close to them. "*Dexaïs el prisionero de Biassou.*" ("Leave Biassou's prisoner.") All the negresses leaped to their feet throwing their implements of torture on one side, put on their feather aprons, and, at a gesture from the Obi, they fled like a cloud of grasshoppers.

At this instant the glance of the Obi fell upon me ; he started back a pace, and half waved his white staff in the direction of the retiring *griotes*, as if he wished to recall them. However, after having muttered between his teeth the word "*Maldicho*" ("accursed"), and said some words in the ear of the negro, he crossed his arms and retired slowly, apparently buried in deep thought.

XXVII.

My captor informed me that Biassou had asked to see me, and that in an hour I must prepare to have an interview with this chief.

It was, nevertheless, another hour of life. Waiting for the time to elapse, my glances wandered over the rebel camp, the singular appearance of which the daylight permitted me to observe. Had I been in any other position, I should have laughed heartily at the ostentatious vanity of the negroes, who were nearly all decked out in fragments of clerical and military dress, the spoils of their victims. The greater portion of these ornaments were only torn and blood-stained rags. It was not strange to see a gorget shining under a band, or an epaulet on a chasuble. Without doubt, to rest from the work to which they had been condemned all their lives, the negroes remained in a state of inaction unknown to our soldiers, who had retired under their tents. Some of them slept exposed to the rays of the sun, their heads

close to a burning fire ; others, with eyes that were sometimes dull and furious, chanting a monotonous air, sat at the doors of their *ajoupas*—a species of hut covered with palm or banana leaves, of which the conical shape resembled our artillery tents. Their black or copper-colored wives, aided by the negro children, prepared the food for the fighting-men. I could see them stirring with forks, iguanas, bananas, yams, peas, cocoa and maize, Caribbean cabbage, which they call *tayo*, and other vegetables indigenous to the country, which they cooked with joints of pork, turtle and dog in the great boilers stolen from the dwellings of the planters. In the distance, on the outskirts of the camp, the *griots* and *griotes* formed large circles round the fires, and the wind brought to my ears fragments of their barbaric songs, mingled with notes from their tambourines and guitars. Some videttes placed on the summit of neighboring rocks on the high ground watched over the headquarters of General Biassou ; the only defense of which in case of an attack was a circle of wagons filled with plunder and ammunition. These black sentries posted on the summits of the granite pyramids, with which the mountains bristled, turned about like the weather-cocks in Gothic spires, and with all the strength of their lungs shouted one to the other, the

cry which showed the security of their camp :
“*Nada ! nada !*” (“ Nothing ! nothing !”)

From time to time groups of curious negroes collected round me. All looked upon me with a threatening expression.

XXVIII.

At length an escort of negro soldiers very fairly equipped arrived. The negro whose property I appeared to be, unfastened me from the oak to which I was bound, and handed me over to the chief of the squad, receiving in exchange a large bag which he opened upon the spot. It was full of piastres. As he knelt upon the grass slowly counting them the soldiers led me away. I examined their equipments with curiosity. They wore a uniform of coarse cloth, reddish-brown and yellow, cut after the Spanish style. A sort of Castilian *montera*, ornamented with a large red cockade (the Spanish), hid their woolly hair. Instead of a cartridge-box, they had a species of game-bag slung at their sides. Their arms were a heavy musket, a sabre, and a dagger. I afterwards learned that these men formed the special body-guard of Biassou.

After a circuitous route through the rows of *ajoupas*, which were scattered all over the camp, we came to a cave which nature had hollowed out in one of those masses of rock by which the meadow was surrounded. A large

curtain of some material from the looms of Thibet, which the negroes called *katchmir*, and which is remarkable less for the brilliancy of its coloring than for the softness of its material and its variegated designs, concealed the interior of the cavern from the vulgar gaze. The entrance was guarded by a double line of negroes, dressed like those who had escorted me hither.

After the countersign had been exchanged with the sentries who marched backwards and forwards before the cave, the commander of the escort raised the *katchmir* curtain, announced me, and then let it drop behind me.

A copper lamp with five lights hung by a chain from the roof, casting a flickering light upon the damp walls of this cave into which daylight never entered. Between the ranks of mulatto soldiers I perceived a colored man sitting upon a large block of mahogany, which was partially covered with a carpet made of parrots' feathers. This man belonged to the *Sacatras* tribe, which is only distinguished from the negroes in a small degree often imperceptible. His dress was ridiculous. A splendid silk girdle, from which hung a cross of Saint Louis, held up a pair of blue trousers of coarse cloth, whilst a waistcoat of white linen, too short to reach to the girdle, completed his costume. He wore high boots, a

round hat with a red cockade, and epaulets, one of gold with silver stars like those worn by brigadiers, whilst the other was of a yellow worsted. Two copper stars, which seemed to have been taken from a pair of spurs, had been fixed upon it, evidently to render it more worthy of its resplendent companion. These epaulets were only kept in place by transverse cords, hanging from either side of the chief's breast. A sabre and a pair of richly chased pistols lay on the feather carpet by his side.

Behind the throne, silent and immovable, were two children dressed in the costume of slaves, bearing large fans of peacock feathers. These two young slaves were white.

Two squares of crimson velvet, which seemed to have belonged to some church pew, marked two places to the right and left of the mahogany block. One of these places, that on the right, was occupied by the Obi, who had rescued me from the frenzy of the *griotes*. He was seated, his legs crossed under him, holding in his right hand his wand, immovable as a porcelain idol in a Chinese pagoda. However, through the holes in his veil, I could see his flashing eyes fixed steadfastly on me.

Upon each side of the general were trophies of flags, banners, and pennons of all kinds, among them I noticed the white flag with the

fleur de lis, the tricolor flag and the flag of Spain. The others were covered with fancy devices. I also perceived a large standard entirely black.

At the end of the grotto, above the chief's head, another object arrested my attention. It was the portrait of the mulatto Ogé, who had been broken on the wheel the year previous at Cap, for the crime of rebellion, with his lieutenant Jean-Baptiste Chavanne, and twenty other blacks or mulattoes. In this painting, Ogé, the son of a butcher at Cap, was represented as he had dressed to sit for his picture, in the uniform of a lieutenant-colonel, with the cross of Saint Louis, and the Order of Merit of the Lion, which he had purchased from the Prince of Limburg, upon his breast.

The negro general into whose presence I had been introduced was of medium figure. His ignoble face showed a strange mixture of cunning and cruelty. He made me approach and looked at me for some time in silence ; at last he sneered like a hyena.

"I am Biassou," said he.

I listened for the name, but I could not hear it from his mouth in the midst of this ferocious laugh, without an inward trembling. My face remained calm and proud. I made no reply.

“Well!” continued he, in very bad French, “have they already impaled you, that you are unable to bend your spine before Jean Biassou, generalissimo of this conquered land, and brigadier of the armies of *su magestad catolica*?” (His Most Catholic Majesty.) [The tactics of the rebel chiefs were to make believe they were sometimes for the King of France, sometimes for the Revolution and sometimes for the King of Spain.]

I crossed my arms upon my chest, and looked him firmly in the face. He again sneered. This seemed to be a habit with him.

“Oh! ho! *me pareces hombre de buen corazon* (you seem to me a courageous man); listen to what I am going to say. Are you a Creole?”

“No,” I replied, “I am French.”

My assurance made him smile. He continued, sneering:

“So much the better! I see by your uniform that you are an officer. How old are you?”

“Twenty.”

“When were you twenty?”

To this question, which aroused in me all the recollection of my misery, I remained absorbed in my thoughts a moment. He repeated it imperiously. I replied:

“The day upon which your friend Léogri was hung.”

Anger contracted his face; his sneer was prolonged. He continued however.

"It is twenty-three days since Léogri was executed," said he. "Frenchman, when you meet him this evening, you may tell him from me that you lived twenty-four days longer than he did. I will spare you for to-day; I wish you to tell him of the liberty that his brethren have gained, and what you have seen at the headquarters of General Jean Biassou, brigadier, and what is the authority of this generalissimo over the *subjects of the king*."

It was under this title that Jean-François, who called himself *Grand Admiral of France*, and his comrade Biassou designated their hordes of rebel negroes and mulattoes.

Then he ordered me to sit down in one corner between two of his guards, and, motioning with his hand to some of his men, wearing the uniform of aides-de-camp, said:

"Let the drums be sounded, that all the army may assemble around your general, to pass in review. And you, your reverence," he added, turning to the Obi, "put on your priestly vestments, and perform for our army the holy sacrament of the mass."

The Obi rose, bowed profoundly before Biassou, and whispered some words to which the chief interrupted in a loud voice.

“Do you say you have no altar, *señor cura!* is that astonishing in these mountains? but never mind, since the *bon Giu* (good Lord) has no need of a magnificent temple for His worship, or an altar ornamented with gold lace. Gideon and Joshua adored Him before masses of rock; let us do as they do. *bon per* (good Father), all that is required is that the hearts should be true. You have no altar! Ah, well, could you not make one of that great chest of sugar which we took day before yesterday from Dubussion’s house?”

This suggestion of Biassou was promptly carried into execution. In an instant the interior of the cave was arranged for a burlesque of the divine ceremony. A tabernacle and pyx stolen from the parish church of Acul (the very church in which my nuptials with Marie had received Heaven’s blessing so soon followed by misfortune), were promptly produced, and the stolen chest of sugar was speedily made into an altar and covered with a white cloth, through which, however, these words could be plainly perceived: *Dubussion et Cie, pour Nantes.*

When the sacred vessels had been placed on the cloth, the Obi perceived that the crucifix was wanting. He drew his cross-handle dagger, and placed it between the communion cup and the monstrance, in

front of the tabernacle. Then without removing his cap or veil, he threw the cape which had been stolen from the priest of Acul, over his shoulders and bare chest, opened the missal with its silver clasps from which the prayers had been read on my ill-fated marriage day, and, turning towards Biassou, whose seat was a few paces from the altar, announced to him, with a profound bow, that all was ready.

On a sign from the general the *katchmir* curtains were drawn aside, and the insurgent army was seen drawn up in close column before the entrance to the grotto. Biassou removed his round hat and knelt before the altar. "On your knees!" he cried, in a loud voice. "On your knees!" repeated the commander of each battalion. The beating of drums was heard. All the insurgents fell upon their knees.

I alone refused to move, disgusted at this vile profanation about to be enacted under my very eyes; but the two powerful mulattoes who guarded me pulled my seat from under me, and pressed heavily upon my shoulders so that I fell on my knees, like the others, compelled to pay a semblance of respect to this parody of a religious ceremony.

The Obi performed his duties with affected solemnity, whilst Biassou's two white pages officiated as deacon and sub-deacon.

The insurgents, prostrated before the altar, assisted at the ceremony with the greatest enthusiasm, the general setting the example. At the moment of the exaltation of the host, the Obi, raising in his hands the consecrated vessel, exclaimed in his Creole jargon: "*Zotè conè bon Giu; ce li mo fè zotè voer. Blan touyé li, touyé blan yo toute!*" ("You see your good God; I am showing Him to you. The white men killed Him! kill all the whites!") Because Toussaint-Louverture had been in the habit of so addressing the negroes in that manner after having communion.) At these words, pronounced in a loud voice, the tones of which had something in them familiar to my ear, all the rebels uttered a loud shout; they clashed their weapons together. Had it not been for Biassou's influence that hour would have been my last. I understand to what excess of courage and activity men could be driven who used the dagger for a cross, and upon whose mind the most trivial event makes a deep and profound impression.

XXIX.

At the termination of the ceremony the Obi bowed respectfully to Biassou, then the general rose, and, addressing me in French, said :

“ We are accused of having no religion, you see it is a falsehood, and that we are good Catholics.”

I do not know whether he spoke ironically or in good faith. A few moments after he called for a glass bowl filled with grains of black maize ; then on the top he threw some white maize, raising the glass above his head so that it could be better seen in the army, he said :

“ Brothers, you are the black maize ; the whites your enemies are the white maize !”

With these words, he shook the bowl, and when nearly all the white grains had disappeared beneath the black, he exclaimed with an air of inspiration and triumph : “ *Guelte blan si la la !*” (See where the whites are now !)

Another shout re-echoed throughout the mountains at this illustration of the general ;

Biassou continued his harangue, mixing his bad French, Creole dialect, and Spanish.

“*El tiempo de la mansuetud es pasado* (The time for gentleness has passed). We have been for a long time as patient as the sheep to whose wool the whites compare our hair; let us now be as implacable as the panthers or the tigers of the countries from which they have torn us. Force alone can obtain for us our rights; everything belongs to those who use their force without pity. Saint Loup (wolf) has two days in the year consecrated to him in the Gregorian calendar, whilst the Paschal Lamb has but one! Is it not so, your reverence?”

The Obi bowed in sign of corroboration.

“They have come,” continued Biassou, “these enemies of ours have come as enemies of the regeneration of humanity, these whites, these planters, these men of business, *verdaderos demonios* (veritable devils) vomited from the mouth of Alecto! *Son venidos con insolencia* (they came insolently); they were clothed in their finery, their uniforms, their feathers, their magnificent arms, and they despised us because we were black and naked; they thought in their pride that they could drive us before them as easily as these peacocks’ feathers disperse the swarms of sandflies and mosquitoes.”

In making this comparison, he snatched from the hands of his white slaves one of the large fans, and waved it over his head with a thousand eccentric gesticulations. He continued :

“But, my brethren, our army burst upon them like flies upon a carcass; they have fallen in their fine uniforms beneath the strokes of our naked arms, which they believed to be without power, ignorant that good wood is the stronger when the bark is stripped off. They tremble now, these accursed tyrants! *Yo gagné peur!*” (They are afraid!)

A triumphant yell rose in answer to the general’s speech, and all the army repeated, “*Yo gagné peur!*”

“Blacks, Creoles, and Congos,” added Biassou, “vengeance and liberty! Mulattoes, do not be led away by the temptations *de los diabolos blancos* (of the diabolical whites). Your fathers serve in their ranks, but your mothers are with us. Besides, *O hermanos de mi alma* (O brethren of my soul), have they ever acted as fathers to you? Have they not rather been masters whilst you were always slaves like the blacks? Whilst a miserable cotton garment covered your bodies scorched by the sun, your cruel fathers went about in *buenos sombreros* (good hats) and nankeen clothes on work days, and on holidays in cloth and

velvet *a diez y siete quartos la vara* (at twenty-seven quartos the vara—a Spanish measure which is equivalent to a yard). Curses be on their unnatural hearts. But as the holy commandments of *bon Giu* forbid you to strike your father, abstain from doing so. If you encounter him in the enemies' ranks what hinders you, *amigos*, from turning to your comrade and saying: '*Touyé papa moé, ma touyé quena toué?*' (Kill my father, I will kill yours.) Vengeance, then, my brethren, and liberty for all men. This cry has found an echo in every part of the island; it is part of *Quisqueya* (ancient name of Santo Domingo, which signifies high hand. The natives also call it *Aity*); it has roused Tobago and Cuba. It was Bouckmann, a negro from Jamaica, the leader of the twenty-five fugitive slaves of the Blue Mountain, who raised the standard of revolt amongst us. A glorious victory was the first proof that he gave of his brotherhood with the negroes of Santo Domingo. Let us follow his noble example, with an axe in one hand and a torch in the other. No mercy for the whites, or the planters: let us massacre their families, and destroy their plantations! Do not allow a tree to remain standing on their estates. Let us upturn the very earth itself, that it may swallow up our white oppressors! Courage

then, friends and brethren! we shall fight them and kill them. We will conquer or die. As victors, we shall enjoy all the pleasures of life, and if we fall, the saints are ready to receive us in heaven, where each warrior will receive a double ration of *aguardiente* (brandy) and a silver piastre each day!"

This warlike discourse, which to you appears perfectly ridiculous, gentlemen, had a tremendous effect on the insurgents. It is true that Biassou's wild gesticulations, the manner in which his voice rose and fell, and the strange sneer which accompanied his words, imparted to his speech a strange amount of power and fascination. The skill with which he alluded to those points which would have the greatest weight with the negroes, added a degree of force which told well with his audience.

I will not attempt to describe to you the outburst of determined enthusiasm which manifested itself in the insurgent army after Biassou's harangue. There arose at once a discordant chorus of howls, yells and shouts. Some beat their breasts, others clashed their clubs and sabres together. Many threw themselves on their knees, and remained in that position as though wrapt in ecstasy. The negresses tore their breasts and arms with the fish-bones which served as combs for their

hair. The sounds of drums, tomtoms, guitars and tambourines were mingled with the discharge of firearms. It was a veritable witches' Sabbath.

Biassou raised his hand, and, as if by enchantment, the tumult was stilled; each negro in silence returned to his place in the ranks. This discipline which Biassou had imposed upon his equals by the exercise of his power of will struck me, I may say, with admiration. All the soldiers of the force seemed to speak and move under the hand of their chief, as the notes of the harpsichord under the fingers of the musician.

XXX.

The spectacle of another example of the powers of fascination and deception now attracted my attention; this was the healing of the wounded. The Obi, who in the army performed the double functions of healer of souls and bodies, began his inspection of his patients. He had taken off his sacerdotal robes, and had brought before him a large box in which were his drugs and instruments. He used the chirurgical instruments very rarely, but occasionally drew blood skillfully enough with a lancet made of fish-bone, but he appeared to me very awkward in the management of the tongs which served him as nippers, and the knife which replaced the bistoury. In most cases he contented himself with prescribing orange-flower water, drinks of china-root, sarsaparilla, and a mouthful of old rum. His favorite remedy, and one which he said was infallible, was composed of three glasses of red wine in which was some grated nutmeg and the yolk of a hard-boiled egg. He employed this specific for almost every malady. You will

understand that his knowledge of medicine was as great a farce as his pretended religion, and it is probable that the small number of cures that he effected would not have secured the confidence of the negroes had he not had recourse to all sorts of mummeries and incantations, and acted as much upon their imaginations as well as upon their bodies. Thus, he contented himself by touching their wounds and performing some mysterious signs; other times he skillfully mingled together religion and negro superstition, and would put into their wounds a little *fetish* stone wrapped in a morsel of lint, and the patient would credit the stone with the healing effects of the lint. If any one came to announce to him the death of a patient he would answer solemnly: "I foresaw it; he was a traitor; in the burning of such and such a house he spared a white man's life; his death was a judgment." And the wondering crowd of rebels applauded more and more, incensed from his sentiments of hatred and vengeance. This charlatan, amongst other methods, employed one which amused me by its singularity. It was for one of the negro chiefs who had been badly wounded in the last action. He examined the wound a long time, dressed it as well as he was able, then, mounting the altar, exclaimed: "All this is nothing." He then

tore three or four leaves from the missal, burnt them in the torch stolen from the church at Acul, and, mingling the cinders with some wine in the sacramental cup, he said to the wounded man, "Drink ; this is the remedy." ⁸ The patient drank, stupidly fixing his eyes on the impostor, who had his hands raised over him as if to call down benedictions from heaven ; and it may be that the conviction that he was healed brought about his cure.

XXXI.

Another scene in which the veiled Obi was principal actor succeeded to this. The physician had taken the place of the priest, and the sorcerer now replaced the physician.

“*Hombres, escuchate !*” (“Men, listen !”) cried the Obi, leaping with incredible agility upon the improvised altar, and sinking down with his legs crossed under his striped petticoat. “*Escuchate, hombres !* Let those who wish to read the book of fate approach ! I can foretell the future. *Hé estudiado la ciencia de los gitanos.*” (I have studied the science of the gipsies).

A crowd of mulattoes and negroes hurriedly crowded up to him.

“One at a time,” said the Obi, in that low voice which called to my mind something that I could not quite recollect. “If you come all together, you will all enter the tomb together.”

They stopped. Just then a colored man dressed in a white jacket and trousers, with a Madras head-dress, after the manner of the rich planters, came close to Biassou. Consternation was depicted on his countenance.

"Well," said the general, in a low voice, "what is it? What is the matter, Rigaud?"

It was the mulatto chief of the assemblage at Cayes, a man who concealed much cunning under an appearance of candor, and cruelty beneath the mask of gentleness. I examined him with attention.

"General," said Rigaud (and he spoke very low, but I was close to Biassou and could hear), "on the outskirts of the camp there is a messenger from Jean-François. Bouckmann has been killed in a battle with M. de Touzard; and the whites have his head as a trophy in their town."

"Is it only that?" asked Biassou, his eyes sparkling with delight at learning the diminution of the number of chiefs and the consequent increase of his own importance.

"The emissary of Jean-François has another message for you."

"That is all right," replied Biassou. "Abandon this air of alarm, my good Rigaud."

"But," said Rigaud, "do you not fear, general, the effect that the death of Bouckmann will have on your army?"

"You are not as simple as you appear, Rigaud," replied the chief, "but you shall see what Biassou will do. Keep the messenger back for a quarter of an hour."

Then he approached the Obi, who during this conversation, heard by me alone, had been exercising his functions as fortune-teller, questioning the wandering negroes, examining the lines on their hands and foreheads, and distributing more or less good luck according to the size and color of the piece of money thrown by each negro into a silver-gilt basin which stood at his feet. Biassou whispered a few words in his ear. The sorcerer without making any reply, continued his prophetic observations.

“The one,” said he, “who has in the middle of his forehead, on the wrinkle of the sun, a little square or triangular figure, will make a large fortune without work or toil.

“The figure of three interlaced S’s on the forehead is a fatal sign; he who has it will certainly be drowned if he does not carefully avoid water.

“Four lines from the top of the nose, and turning round two by two towards the eyes, announce that you will be taken prisoner, and for a long time remain a captive in the hands of a stranger.”

Here the Obi paused.

“Friends,” continued he, “I have observed this sign in the forehead of Bug-Jargal, the brave chief of Morne-Rouge.”

These words, which convinced me that Bug-Jargal had been made prisoner, were followed by a cry of grief from a band of negroes who wore short scarlet breeches. They belonged to the band of Morne-Rouge.

Then the Obi began again :

“If you have on the right side of the forehead in the line of the moon, some figure which resembles a fork, do not remain idle, and avoid dissipation of all kinds.

“A small mark is important, the Arabic cipher 3 on the line of the sun betokens blows with a stick.”

An old Spanish negro here interrupted the magician, and he dragged himself begging him to dress his wound. He had been wounded in the face, and one of his eyes, almost torn from the socket, hung bleeding. The Obi had forgotten him when going through his patients. Directly he saw him he cried out :

“Round marks on the right side of the forehead on the line of the moon foretell misfortunes to the eyes. *Hombre*” (man), said he to the miserable wounded man, “this sign is very apparent on your forehead ; let me see your hand.”

“Alas, *exelentísimo señor*” (excellent sir), answered the other, “*mis’-usted mis ojo !*” (look at my eye !)

"*Fatras*" (veteran negro), replied the Obi, crossly, "I have little need to see your eye! Your hand, I say."

The miserable wretch gave his hand moaning, "*mi ojo !*" (my eye !)

"Good," said the Obi; "if you see on the line of life a spot surrounded by a circle you will become blind, because this figure announces the loss of an eye. There it is. There is the spot and the little circle. You will become blind."

"*Ya le soy*" (I am so already), answered the *fatras*, piteously.

But the Obi, who was no longer a physician, had thrust him roughly aside, and continuing without paying any heed to the poor blind man, cries :

"*Escuchate, hombres !* (Listen, men). If the seven lines on the forehead are slight, twisted, and lightly marked, they announce a short life.

"He who has between his eyebrows on the line of the moon the figure of two crossed arrows will be killed in battle.

"If the line of life which intersects the hand has a cross at its junction it foretells death on the scaffold.

"And here I must tell you, *hermanos*," said the Obi, interrupting himself, "that one of the bravest defenders of our liberties, Bouckmann, has these three fatal marks."

At these words all the negroes held their breath; their immovable eyes fixed on the impostor expressed that sort of attention which resembles stupor, with glances of stupid admiration.

"Only," continued the Obi, "I cannot reconcile the two opposing signs, death on the battle-field and also on the scaffold. However, my science is infallible."

He stopped and cast a meaning glance at Biassou. Biassou whispered something to one of his aides-de-camp, an officer, who at once quitted the cavern.

"A wrinkled and gaping mouth," continued the Obi, turning on his audience a malicious glance, "an insipid attitude and arms hanging, and the left hand turned out, without defining the motive, announce natural stupidity, emptiness, and want of reasoning powers."

Biassou gave a sneer of delight; at that moment the aide-de-camp returned, bringing with him a negro covered with mud and dust, whose feet, wounded by the roots and flints, showed that he had just come off a long journey. This was the messenger Rigaud had announced. He held in one hand a sealed package, and in the other a document with the design of a flaming heart. In the middle was a monogram, composed of the letters *M*

and *N* interlaced, no doubt intended as an emblem of the union of the free mulattoes and the negro slaves. At the side of this monogram I could read this motto: "*Prejudice conquered, the rod of iron broken, long live the king!*" This document was a safe conduct given by Jean-François.

The messenger presented it to Biassou, and, after bowing profoundly, handed him the sealed paper. The general hastily tore it open and perused the contents, and put it in the pocket of his vest, and crushing the other in his hands, cried in a sorrowful voice :

"People of the king!"

The negroes bowed respectfully.

"People of the king! this is a dispatch to Jean Biassou, generalissimo of the conquered states, Brigadier-General of His Catholic Majesty, from Jean-François, Grand Admiral of France, Lieutenant-General of the army of the King of Spain and the Indies.

"Bouckmann, chief of the hundred and twenty negroes of the Blue Mountain, of Jamaica, recognized independents by the Governor-General of Belle-Combe, Bouckmann has just fallen in the glorious struggle of liberty and humanity against tyranny and barbarism. This generous chief has been slain in an action with the white brigands of the infamous Touzard. The monsters have

cut off his head, and have announced their intention of exposing it on a scaffold in the main square of the town of Cap. Vengeance!"

A gloomy silence succeeded the reading of this dispatch; but the Obi leaped on his altar, and waving his white wand, exclaimed in accents of triumph:

"Solomon, Zorobabel, Eléazar Thaleb, Cardan, Judas Bowtharicht, Averroès, Albert the Great, Bohabdil, Jean de Hagen, Anna Baratio, Daniel Ogrumof, Rachel Flintz, Altornino, I give you thanks. The *ciencia* (science) of the prophets has not deceived me. *Hijos, amigos, hermanos, muchachos, mozos, madres, y vosotros todas qui me escuchais aqui* (sons, friends, brothers, boys, children, mothers, all of you listen to me), *que habia dicho* ! (what I predicted !) The marks on the forehead of Bouckmann announced that his life would be a short one, that he would die in battle; the marks on his hand that he would appear on the scaffold. The revelations of my art have come true, and the events arranged themselves to be executed in a way in which we could not make them agree, the death on the field of battle, and the scaffold ! Brethren, admire !"

The panic of the negroes changed during this discourse to a sort of admiring terror.

They listened to the Obi with confidence mingled with fear; whilst the latter, carried away by his own enthusiasm, walked up and down the sugar-cane, the surface of which offered enough space for his short steps. Biassou sneered.

He addressed the Obi.

“Your reverence, since you know what is to come, it would please us if you will read what is to become of our future, that of Jean Biassou, *mariscal de campo*.”

The Obi standing on the top of his strange altar, which the credulity of the negroes looked upon as something divine, said to the *mariscal de campo*: “*Venga vuestra merced*” (Come, your Excellency). At this moment the Obi was the most important man in the army, the military power bowed to the spiritual. Biassou approached. I could see some anger in his eyes.

“Your hand, general,” said the Obi, stooping to kiss it in order to grasp it. “*Empezo* (I begin). The *line of junction* equally marked in its full length, promises you riches and happiness; the *line of life*, long, and strongly developed, announces a life exempt from ills, and a happy old age; narrow it, shows your wisdom and your superior talents, the *generosidad* (generosity) of your heart; lastly, I see what *chiromancos*

(chiromancers) call the luckiest of all signs, a number of little wrinkles in the shape of a tree with its branches extending upwards ; it promises wealth and grandeur. The *line of health*, very long, confirms the signs of the line of life ; it indicates courage also ; bending back towards the little finger, it forms a kind of hook. General, this is the sign of wholesome severity."

At this word the brilliant eyes of the little Obi glanced at me through the apertures of his veil, and I remarked at another time a well-known accent hidden under the habitual gravity of his voice. He continued with the same gestures and intonation :

"Marked with *the line of health*, small circles, announce that you will have to order a number of executions. It is divided toward the middle to form a half-circle, which shows that you will be exposed to great danger from ferocious beasts, that is to say, from the whites, if you do not exterminate them. The *line of fortune* surrounded, like the line of life, by little branches rising towards the upper part of the hand, confirms the position of power and supremacy to which you have been called ; turning to the right and slender in the upper part, announces the talent of governing. The fifth line, that of the *triangle*, prolonged to the root of the middle

finger, promises you success in all your undertakings. Let me see your fingers. The thumb marked with little lines from the nail to the joint shows that you will receive a noble heritage; that of the glory of Bouckmann, no doubt," added the Obi, in a loud voice. "The slight swelling at the root of the forefinger is lightly marked with lines; honors and dignities! The middle finger shows nothing. Your little finger is covered with lines crossing each other, you will vanquish all your enemies, you will dominate over your rivals! These lines form the cross of Saint Andrew, a mark of genius and foresight. The joint which unites the little finger to the hand offers tortuous wrinkles; fortune will load you with favors. I also notice the figure of a circle, another token of your arrival at the highest power and dignity!

"'Happy the man,' says Eléazar Thaleb, 'who possesses all these signs! Destiny marks him with prosperity, and his fortunate star announces the talent which will bring him glory.' Now, general, let me look at your forehead. 'He,' says Rachel Flintz, the Bohemian, 'who bears on his forehead, on the line of the sun, a square or a triangular mark, will make a great fortune.' Here it is very pronounced. 'If the mark is on the right, it refers to an important succession.'

Always that of Bouckmann ! (The mark in the shape of a horseshoe between the eyebrows, under the line of the moon, means that prompt vengeance will be taken for an insult and tyranny.) I have this mark ; you have it also."

The curious manner in which the Obi uttered these words, "*I have this mark*," attracted my attention.

"We notice it," added he in the same tone, "with the brave men who meditate a revolt and break their servitude in a combat. The lion's claw which you have imprinted above your eyebrows shows undoubted courage. Finally, General Jean Biassou, your forehead shows every sign of success ; it is a combination of lines which form the letter *M*, the commencement of the name of the Virgin. In whatever part of the forehead, and in whatever line of the face, such a sign appears, the signification is the same—genius, glory and power. He who bears it will always bring success to whatever cause he embraces ; and those under his command will never have to regret any loss ; he alone is worth all the soldiers of his army. You, general, are elected by Fate."

"*Gracias* (thanks), your reverence," said Biassou, preparing to return to his mahogany throne.

"Stay a moment, general," said the Obi, "I forgot one last sign. The line of the sun, so strongly marked on your forehead, proves that you understand the way of the world, that you possess the wish to make others happy, that you have much liberality, and like to do things in a magnificent manner."

Biassou understood that forgetfulness comes to him more often than to the Obi. He drew from his pocket a heavy purse, and threw it into the silver plate, so as to prove that the *line of the sun* never lied.

Meanwhile, this miraculous horoscope of the general's had produced its effect upon the army. All the insurgents who, since the news of the death of Bouckmann, attached greater weight than ever to the words of the Obi, lost their feelings of uneasiness and became violently enthusiastic, and, trusting blindly in their infallible sorcerer and their predestined chief, began to shout, "*Long live our Obi! Long live Biassou!*" The Obi and Biassou glanced at each other, and I almost thought I could hear the stifled laugh of the Obi answer the sardonic chuckle of the general.

I do not know why this Obi tormented my thoughts; I had a feeling that I had seen or heard some one who resembled this strange being; I made up my mind to speak to him.

"Mr. Obi, *señor cura*, your reverence, *bon per!*" (good father!) cried I to him.

He turned sharply round.

"There is some one here whose lot you have not yet cast—it is mine."

He crossed his arms over the silver sun that covered his hairy breast, but he made no reply. I continued:

"I would gladly know what you prophesy with regard to my future; but your worthy comrades have taken my watch and my purse, and you will not give me a specimen of your skill *gratis*."

He advanced quickly to me, and muttered hoarsely in my ear:

"You deceive yourself! Let me see your hand."

I gave it, looking fixedly at him; his eyes sparkled; he pretended to examine my hand.

"If the line of life," said he, "is cut by two traverse lines, death will be next.

"If the line of health is not in the centre of the hand, and if there is only the line of fortune united so as to form an angle, we ought not to look for a natural death. Do not, therefore, look for a natural death! If the bottom of the forefinger has a long line cutting it, a violent death will be the result. Do you hear? Prepare yourself for a violent death!"

There was a ring of pleasure in this sepulchral voice which announced my death, but I listened to him with contempt and indifference.

“Sorcerer,” said I, with a disdainful smile, “you are skillful, for you are speaking of a certainty.”

Once more he came closer to me.

“You doubt my science? Ah, well! listen, once more. The severance of the line of the sun on your forehead shows me that you take an enemy for a friend, and a friend for an enemy.”

These words seemed to refer to the treacherous Pierrot, whom I loved, but who had betrayed me, and to the faithful Habibrah, who I had hated, and whose blood-stained garments attested his fidelity and his devotion.

“What do you say?” I exclaimed.

“Listen until the end,” continued the Obi. “I spoke of the future, here is the past: The line of the moon on your forehead is slightly curved;—this signifies that your wife has been carried off.”

I trembled; and endeavored to spring from my seat; but my guards held me back.

“You are not patient,” continued the sorcerer; “listen to the end. The little cross that cuts the extremity of that curve

shows me all ; your wife was carried off on the very night of your nuptials."

"Wretch," cried I, "you know where she is! Who are you?"

I strove again to free myself, and to tear away his veil ; but I had to yield to numbers and to force, and I saw with rage the mysterious Obi move away repeating :

"Do you believe me now? Prepare thyself for death."

XXXII.

My attention was drawn from the perplexity into which I had been thrown by the strange scene, to a new drama which succeeded the farce that had been played before their amazed band.

Biassou had again taken his place upon his mahogany throne ; the Obi was seated on his right, Rigaud on his left, on the two squares which accompanied the chief's throne. The Obi, with his arms crossed on his breast, seemed to have given himself up to deep thought. Biassou and Rigaud were chewing tobacco ; and an aide-de-camp had just asked the *mariscal de campo* if he should order a general march of the forces, when three tumultuous groups of negroes, with hideous shouts, arrived at the entrance of the grotto. Each one of these groups brought a prisoner to be judged by Biassou, not to know whether he would forgive them but to know the manner of death which the unfortunate ones should endure. Their sinister cries announced as much: "*Mort ! Mort !*" "*Muerte ! Muerte !*" and "Death ! Death !" cried some English

negroes from Bouckmann's band, many of whom had by this time arrived to join Biassou's French and Spanish negroes.

The *mariscal de campo* with a gesture of his hand commanded silence, and ordered the three captives to be brought to the entrance of the grotto. I recognized two of them with considerable surprise; one was citizen-General C——, that philanthropist who was in correspondence with all the lovers of the negro race in different parts of the globe, and who had proposed to the governor so cruel a mode of suppressing the insurrection. The other was the planter of doubtful origin, who manifested so great a dislike to the mulattoes, amongst whom the whites insisted on classing him. The third appeared to belong to a section called "*poor whites*;" he wore a leathern apron, and his sleeves were turned up to his elbows. All three had been taken at different times, hiding in the mountains.

The "poor white" was the first one that was questioned.

"Who are you?" asked Biassou.

"I am Jacques Belin, carpenter to the Hospital of the Fathers, at Cap."

Surprise and shame struggled for the mastery in the eyes of the *generalissimo* of the conquered country.

"Jacques Belin!" repeated he, biting his lips.

"Yes," replied the carpenter; "do you not recognize me?"

"Begin," retorted the *mariscal de campo* furiously, "by recognizing and saluting *me*."

"I do not salute my slave," replied the carpenter.

"Your slave, wretch!" cried the general.

"Yes," replied the carpenter; "yes, I was your first master. You pretend not to recognize me; but recollect, Jean Biassou, that I sold you for thirteen piastres to a Santo Domingo slave merchant."

An expression of concentrated rage passed over Biassou's face.

"Well," continued the carpenter, "you appear ashamed of having worked for me; ought not Jean Biassou to feel proud of having belonged to Jacques Belin? Your own mother, the old idiot, has often swept out my shop; but now I have sold her to the majordomo of the Hospital of the Fathers; she was so decrepit, that he would only give me thirty-two livres and six sous for her. There is your history and mine; but it seems as if the negroes and the mulattoes are growing proud, and that you have forgotten the time when, on your knees, you served Master Jacques Belin, the carpenter at Cap."

Biassou listened to him with that sardonic smile that gave him the appearance of a tiger.

"Good!" said he.

Then he turned to the negroes who had captured Belin :

"Get two trestles, two planks, and a saw, and take this man away. Jacques Belin, carpenter of Cap, thank me, for you shall have a true carpenter's death."

His sardonic laugh too fully explained the horrible manner in which he intended to punish the pride of his former master. I shivered ; but Jacques Belin did not frown ; he turned proudly to Biassou.

"Yes," said he, "I ought to thank you, for I sold you for thirteen piastres, and you certainly brought me more than you were worth."

They dragged him away.

XXXIII.

More dead than alive, the other two prisoners had witnessed this frightful prologue of their own end. Their timid and terrified appearance contrasted with the rather boastful audacity of the carpenter; they trembled in every limb.

Biassou looked at them one after the other with a fox-like glance, then, taking pleasure in prolonging their agony, he began a discussion with Rigaud upon the different kinds of tobacco, asserting that Havana tobacco was only good for manufacturing cigars, whilst for snuff he knew nothing better than the Spanish tobacco, two barrels of which Bouckmann had sent him, being a portion of the plunder of M. Lebattu's stores in the Turtle island. Then turning sharply upon citizen-General C——, he asked him :

“What is your opinion?”

This sudden address utterly confounded the timid citizen. He stammered out :

“General, I am entirely of your Excellency's opinion.”

"You flatter me," replied Biassou; "I want *your* opinion and not mine. Do you know any tobacco that makes better snuff than that of Mr. Lebattu's?"

"No, my lord," answered C——, whose evident terror greatly amused Biassou.

"'General!' 'Your Excellency!' 'My Lord!'" replied the chief impatiently. "You are an aristocrat."

"Oh, no, certainly not," exclaimed the citizen-general: "I am a good patriot of '91, and an ardent négrophile."

"Négrophile!" interrupted the general. "Pray what is a négrophile?"

"It is a friend of the blacks," stammered the citizen.

"It is not enough to be a friend of the blacks; you must also be a friend of the men of color."

I believe I have said that Biassou was a half-caste.

"Men of color is what I should have said," replied the lover of the blacks, humbly. "I am acquainted with all the most famous partisans of the negroes and the mulattoes."

Biassou again interrupted him, delighted at the opportunity of humiliating a white man.

"Negroes and mulattoes! What do you mean, pray? do you come here to insult me with these odious names invented out of

contempt by the whites? There are only men of color and blacks here—do you understand that, Mr. Planter?”

“It was a slip, a bad habit contracted in childhood,” answered C——. “Pardon me, my lord, I have no wish to offend you.”

“Leave off this ‘my lording’ business; I have already told you that I don’t like these aristocratic ways.”

C—— again endeavored to excuse himself, and began to stammer out a fresh explanation.

“If you knew me, citizen . . .”

“Citizen! for whom do you take me?” cried Biassou, with anger. “I detest all this Jacobin jargon. Perhaps you are a Jacobin? Remember that you are speaking to the generalissimo of the king’s troops. ‘Citizen!’ Insolent!”

The unhappy partisan of the negro race did not know in what terms to address this man who equally disdained the titles of “my lord” or “citizen,” the aristocratic and republican modes of salutation; he was beside himself. Biassou, whose anger was only assumed, cruelly enjoyed his embarrassment.

“Alas,” at last said the citizen-general, “you do me an injustice, noble defender of the unwritten rights of half the human race.”

In his perplexity to hit upon an acceptable mode of address to a man who appeared to

disdain all titles, he had recourse to one of those sonorous periphrases which the republicans occasionally substituted for the name and title of the persons with whom they were in conversation.

Biassou looked at him steadily and said :

“Do you love the blacks and the mulattoes?”

“Do I love them?” exclaimed citizen C——, “I correspond with Brissot and . . .”

Biassou interrupted him with a sardonic laugh. “Ha, ha, I am glad to find in you a friend to our cause. In this case you ought to detest those wretched colonists who punish our just insurrection by the most cruel executions; you ought to think, with us, that it is not the blacks, but the whites, who are the true rebels, since they revolt against the laws of nature and humanity! You ought to execrate these monsters!”

“I do execrate them,” answered C——.

“Well,” continued Biassou, “what do you think of a man who, in his endeavors to crush the latest efforts of the slaves to regain their liberty, placed the heads of fifty black men on each side of the avenue that led to his house?”

C——’s pallor became frightful.

“What do you think of a white man who would propose to surround the town of Cap with a circle of negro heads?”

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the terrified citizen.

"Am I threatening you?" replied Biassou, coldly. "Let me finish. . . . A circle of heads that would surround the city from Fort Picolet to Cape Caracol? What do you think of that? Answer me."

The words of Biassou, "Do I threaten you," had given a faint ray of hope to C——, for he fancied that the general might have heard of this terrible proposition without knowing the author of it; he therefore replied with some firmness, in order to remove any impression that the idea was his own:

"I consider such a suggestion an atrocious crime."

Biassou chuckled.

"Good, and what punishment should be inflicted on the man who proposed it?"

Here the unfortunate C—— hesitated.

"Well," cried Biassou, "are you the friend of the blacks or not?"

Of the two alternatives the négrophile chose the least threatening one, and seeing no hostile light in Biassou's eyes, he answered in a low voice:

"The guilty person deserves death."

"Very well answered," replied Biassou, calmly, and throwing aside the tobacco that he had been chewing.

Meanwhile, his air of indifference had given the unfortunate lover of the negro race some assurance; and he made another effort to dissipate any suspicions which might have been engendered against him.

"No one," cried he, "has a more ardent desire for your success than I. I correspond with Brissot and Pruneau de Pomme-Gouge, in France; Magaw, in America; Peter Paulus, in Holland; Abbé Tamburini, in Italy. . . ."

He continued to unfold the same philanthropic names which he formerly repeated under other circumstances and with a different motive, at the council held at M. de Blanchelande's, when Biassou interrupted him.

"Ah! What do I care about your correspondents? Tell me rather where are your granaries and store-houses, my army has need of supplies. Your plantations are doubtless rich, and your business must be lucrative since you correspond with so many merchants throughout the world."

Citizen C—— ventured timidly to remark:

"Heroes of humanity, these are not merchants, but philosophers, philanthropists, lovers of the race of blacks."

"Come, then," said Biassou, with a shake of his head, "if you have nothing that can be plundered, what good are you?"

This question afforded a chance of safety of which C—— eagerly availed himself.

“Illustrious warrior,” exclaimed he “have you an economist in your army?”

“What is that?” asked the general.

“It is,” replied the prisoner, with as much calmness as his fears would permit him to assume, “it is a most necessary man, one whom all appreciate, one who follows out and classes in their proper order the respective material resources of an empire, and gives to each its real value, increasing and improving them by combining their sources and results, and pouring them like fertilizing streams into the main river of general utility, which in its turn swells the great sea of public prosperity.”

“*Caramba !*” observed Biassou, leaning over towards the Obi. “What the deuce does he mean by all these words strung together like the beads on your rosary?”

The Obi shrugged his shoulders in sign of ignorance and disdain. However, citizen C—— continued :

“I have studied—deign to hear me, valiant chief of the regenerators of Santo Domingo—I have studied the works of the greatest economists—Turgot, Raynal, and Mirabeau, the friend of man. I have put their theories into practice, I thoroughly understand the

science indispensable for the government of kingdoms and states . . .”

“The economist is not economical in his words,” observed Rigaud, with his bland and cunning smile.

“But you, eternal talker,” cried Biassou, “tell me, have I any kingdoms or states to govern?”

“Not yet perhaps, great man,” replied C——, “but they will come; and besides, my knowledge extends to all the useful details for the management of an army.”

The general again interrupted him.

“I do not manage my army, Mr. Planter, I command it.”

“Good,” replied the citizen; “you shall be the commander, I will be the commissary; I have much special knowledge as to the breeding of cattle.”

“Do you think we are going to breed cattle?” cried Biassou, with his sardonic laugh; “we eat them. When cattle become scarce in the French colony I shall cross the line of mountains on the frontier and take the Spanish sheep and oxen which are raised on the plains of Cotuy, of La Vega, of Sant-Jago, and from the banks of the Yuna; if necessary I will look for those which graze on the peninsula of Samana, and back of the mountain of Cibos, and

from the mouths of the Neybe to those of Santo Domingo. Besides, I should be glad to punish those infernal Spanish planters. Those who delivered up Ogé! You see I am not uneasy as regards provisions, and so have no need of your superior knowledge!"

This open declaration disconcerted the poor economist; he made, however, one more effort for safety.

"My studies," said he, "have not been limited to the reproduction of cattle, I am acquainted with other special branches of knowledge that may be very useful to you. I can show you the method of manufacturing pitch and working coal mines."

"What is that to me!" exclaimed Biassou. "When I want charcoal I burn three leagues of forest."

"I can tell you the proper use of all kinds of wood," continued the prisoner; "the chicaron and the sabiecca for the keels of ships; the yabas for the knee of sternpost; the medlars for the framework; the hacomas, the gaïacs, the cedars, the acomas——"

"*Que te lleven todos los demonios de los diez-y-siete infiernos!*" ("May the devils of the seventeen hells fly away with you!") cried Biassou, impatiently.

"I beg your pardon, my gracious patron," said the trembling economist, who did not understand Spanish.

"Listen," said Biassou, "I don't need vessels, there is only one vacancy in my suite. It is not the place of *major-domo*, it is the position of valet. Tell me, *señor filosofo* (Mr. Philosopher), if that will suit you? you will have to serve me on your bended knees; you will carry my pipe, cook my *calalou* and turtle soup; and you will bring my *calalou* (Creole stew); and will carry behind me a fan of peacock or parrot feathers, like those two pages which you see. Well! answer, do you wish to be my valet?"

Citizen C——, whose only desire was to save his life, bent to the earth with a thousand expressions of joy and gratitude.

"You accept then?" asked Biassou.

"Do you think, generous master, that I hesitate for a moment before accepting so distinguished a post as that of being in constant attendance on you?"

At this reply the diabolical sneer of Biassou became more pronounced. He rose up with an air of triumph, crossing his arms and thrusting aside with his foot the head of the white man who was prostrate on the ground before him, he cried in a loud voice:

“I am delighted at being able to prove how far the cowardice of the white man could go, after having seen the extent of their cruelty. Citizen C——, it is to you that I owe this double experience. I know all; how could you have been sufficiently stupid to think that I did not perceive it? It was you who presided at the executions of June, July, and August; it was you who placed fifty negro heads on each side of your avenue in place of palms; it was you who proposed to slaughter the five hundred negroes who were confined in irons after the revolt, and to encircle the town of Cap with their heads from Fort Picolet to Cape Caracol. If you could have done it you would have placed my head amongst them; now you think yourself lucky if I will take you as my body-servant. No, no! I have more regard for your honor than you yourself have; and I will not inflict this affront on you. Prepare to die!”

He made a gesture, and the negroes removed the unhappy lover of the blacks to a position near me, where, without being able to articulate a word, he fell to the ground fainting.

XXXIV.

"It is your turn now," said the general, turning to the last of the prisoners, the planter who was accused by the white men of being a mulatto, and who had on that account sent me a challenge.

A general clamor drowned the planter's reply. "*Muerte ! Muerte !* Death ! *Mort ! Touyé ! Touyé !*" cried the negroes, grinding their teeth, and shaking their fists at the unhappy captive.

"General," said a mulatto, making himself heard above the uproar, "he is a white man, and he must die !"

The poor planter, by cries and gestures, was at last able to get a hearing.

"No, no, general, no, my brothers, I am not a white man. It is infamous calumny ! I am a mulatto, of mixed blood ; son of a negress, like your mother and sisters."

"He lies," cried the infuriated negroes, "he is a white man, he has always detested blacks and colored people."

"Never," retorted the prisoner. "It is the whites that I detest. I am one of your

brothers. I have always said with you : '*Nègre cé blan, blan cé nègre.*' " ("The negroes are the whites, the whites are the negroes," or, more freely translated : "The negroes are the masters, the whites are the slaves.")

"Not at all," cried the crowd, "not at all; *touyé blan, touyé blan !*" ("Kill the white man ! Kill the white man !")

Still the unhappy wretch kept repeating in heartrending accents :

"I am a mulatto, I am one of yourselves."

"Give me a proof," was Biassou's sole reply.

"A proof," answered the prisoner, wildly, "a proof is that the whites have always despised me."

"That may be true," returned Biassou, "but you are an insolent hound to tell us so."

A young mulatto stepped to the front and addressed the planter in an excited manner.

"The whites justly despised you ; but, on the other hand, you affected to look down upon the mulattoes, amongst whom they classed you. It has even been reported that you once challenged a white man who called you a half-caste."

A howl of execration arose from the crowd, and the cry of "death" was repeated more loudly than ever, whilst the planter, casting

at me a look of disappointment and prayer, continued, with tears in his eyes :

“It is a calumny, my greatest glory and happiness is in belonging to the blacks. I am a mulatto.”

“If you really were a mulatto,” observed Rigaud, quietly, “you would not make use of that hated expression.”

“Alas ! how do I know what I am saying ?” asked the panic-stricken wretch. “General, the proof that I am of mixed blood is in the black circle that you see round the bottom of my nails.””

Biassou thrust aside the suppliant hand.

“I do not possess the knowledge of our chaplain, who can tell what a man is by looking at his hand. But listen to me: my soldiers accuse you—some, of being a white man ; others, of being a false brother. If this is the case you ought to die. You, on the other hand, assert that you belong to our race, and that you have never denied it. There remains with you one method by which you can prove your assertions and save yourself.”

“What, general, what ?” demanded the planter with eagerness. “I am ready.”

“Here,” said Biassou, coldly, “take this dagger and stab these two white prisoners !”

As he spoke he designated us with a look and with a wave of his hand. The planter

drew back from the dagger which, with a devilish smile on his face, Biassou presented to him.

"What," said the general, "do you hesitate? It is your only chance of proving your assertion to the army that you are not a white, and are one of ourselves. Come, decide at once, you have no time to lose."

The prisoner's eyes glared wildly. He stretched out his hand towards the dagger, then let his arm fall again, and stopped to turn away his head. Every limb quivered with emotion.

"Come, come," cried Biassou, in tones of impatience and anger, "I am in a hurry. Make your choice—either kill them, or die with them!"

The planter remained motionless, as if he had been turned to stone.

"Good!" said Biassou, turning towards the negroes, "he does not wish to be the executioner, let him be the victim. I can see that he is nothing but a white man—away with him; you others!"

The negroes advanced to seize the planter. This movement impelled him to immediately choose between giving or receiving death. Extreme cowardice produces also courage. He snatched the dagger that Biassou still held out to him, and without giving himself time

to reflect upon what he was about to do, he precipitated himself like a tiger upon citizen C——, who was lying on the ground near me.

Then a terrible struggle commenced. The lover of the negro race, who had, at the conclusion of his interview with Biassou, remained plunged in a state of despair and stupor, had noticed the scene between the general and the planter with fixed gaze, and so absorbed was he in the thought of his approaching death that he had not appeared to comprehend it; but when he saw the man rush upon him, and the steel gleam above his head, the imminence of his danger aroused him at once. He started to his feet, grasped the arm of his would-be murderer, and exclaimed in a voice of terror—

“Pardon! pardon! What are you doing? What have I done?”

“You must die, sir,” said the half-caste, fixing his frenzied eyes upon his victim, and endeavoring to disengage his arm. “Let me do it; I will not hurt you.”

“Die by your hand,” cried the economist; “but why? Spare me! you wish perhaps to kill me because I used to say that you were a mulatto. But spare my life, and I vow that I will always declare that you are a white man. Yes, you are white, I will say so everywhere, but spare me!”

The unfortunate man had taken the wrong method of suing for mercy.

"Silence! silence!" cried the half-caste, furiously, and fearing the negroes would hear the assertion.

But the other cried louder than ever, without listening to him, that he knew that he was a white man, and of good family. The half-caste made a last effort to impose silence on him, he thrust aside his arms and pressed the dagger upon C——'s breast. The unhappy man felt the point of the weapon, and in his rage bit the arm which held it.

"Monster! wretch! You are murdering me!"

He cast a glance of supplication towards Biassou.

"Defend me, avenger of humanity!"

But the murderer pressed more heavily on the dagger; a gush of blood bubbled over his fingers, and spattered his face. The knees of the unhappy lover of the negro race bent beneath him, his arms fell by his side, his eyes closed, and he uttered a stifled groan. Then he fell dead.

XXXV.

I was paralyzed with horror at this scene, in which I every moment expected to play an important part. The "Avenger of Humanity" had gazed on the struggle of his two victims without flinching. When all was over, he turned to his terrified pages.

"Bring me more tobacco," said he; and began to chew calmly.

The Obi and Rigaud were impassible, and the negroes appeared terrified at the horrible drama that their general had caused to be enacted before them.

One white man, however, yet remained to be slaughtered, it was I; my turn had come. I cast a glance upon the murderer who was about to become my executioner. He had some pity for me. His lips were violet, his teeth chattered, a convulsive tremor caused every limb to quiver, making him totter. By a mechanical movement his hand was continually passed over his forehead, as if to obliterate the traces of the blood; and he looked with an air of terrified wonder at the bleeding body which lay at his feet. His

haggard eyes could not take themselves from his victim.

I waited for the moment when he would resume his task by my blood. I was in a strange position with this man: he had already failed to kill me, to prove that he was white: he was going to murder me to show that he was a mulatto.

"Come," said Biassou, addressing him, "that is good; I am pleased with you, my friend." Then glancing at me, he added: "You need not finish the other one. Go away. We declare you one of us, and name you executioner to the army."

At these words of the chief a negro stepped out of the ranks, bowed three times before Biassou, and cried out in his jargon—which I will translate into French to facilitate matters.

"And I, general?"

"Well, what do you want?" asked Biassou.

"Are you going to do nothing for me, general?" asked the negro. "Here you give an important post to this dog of a white, who murders in order to prove that he is one of ourselves. Have you no post to give to me, who am a true black?"

This unexpected request seemed to embarrass Biassou; he leaned toward Rigaud, and the chief of the Assembly of Cayes whispered to him in French:

"You can't satisfy him; try to elude his request."

"You wish for promotion, then?" asked Biassou, of the true black. "Well, I am willing enough to grant it to you. What grade do you wish?"

"I wish to be an officer."

"An officer," replied the general. "And what are your claims to the epaulet founded on?"

"It was I," answered the negro, emphatically, "who set fire to the house of Lagoscelte in the first day of August last. It was I who murdered M. Clement, the planter, and carried the head of his sugar refiner on my pike. I killed ten white women and seven small children, one of whom on the point of a spear served as a standard for Bouckmann's brave blacks. Later on I burnt alive the families of four colonists, whom I had locked up in a strong room of Fort Galifet. My father was broken on the wheel at Cap, my brother was hung at Rocrou, and I narrowly escaped being shot. I have burnt three coffee plantations, six indigo estates, and two hundred acres of sugar-cane; I murdered my master, M. Noé, and his mother . . ."

"Spare us the recital of your services," said Rigaud, whose feigned benevolence was

the mask for real cruelty, but who was ferocious with decency, and could not listen to this cynical confession of deeds of violence.

"I could quote many others," continued the negro, proudly, "but you will no doubt consider that these are sufficient to insure my promotion, and to entitle me to wear a gold epaulet on my coat like my comrades there."

He pointed to the aides-de-camp and the staff of Biassou. The general affected to reflect for a few minutes, and then gravely addressed these words to the negro :

"I am satisfied with your services, and should be pleased to promote you, but you must satisfy me on one point. Do you understand Latin?"

The astonished negro opened his eyes widely, and said :

"Eh, general?"

"Yes," repeated Biassou, quickly; "do you understand Latin?"

"La . . . Latin?" stammered the astonished negro.

"Yes, yes, yes, Latin; do you understand Latin?" said the cunning chief. And, unfolding a banner upon which was embroidered the verse from the Psalms, *In exitu Israël de Ægypto*, he added, "Explain the meaning of these words."

The negro, in complete ignorance of what was meant, remained silent and motionless, fumbling with the waistband of his trousers, whilst his astonished eyes wandered from the banner to the general, and from the general back to the banner.

"Come, go on," exclaimed Biassou, impatiently.

The negro opened and shut his mouth several times, scratched his head, and at last said, hesitatingly :

"I don't understand it, general."

Biassou's face took on an expression of anger and indignation.

"How, scoundrel!" cried he; "how! you wish to become an officer, and you do not understand Latin!"

"But, general," stammered the confused and trembling negro.

"Silence," roared Biassou, whose anger appeared to increase; "I do not know what prevents me from having you shot at once for your presumption. Do you understand, Rigaud, this impertinent officer who does not even know Latin? Well then, idiot, as you do not understand what is written on this banner I will explain. *In exitu*—every soldier, *Israël*—who does not understand Latin, *de Ægypto*—cannot be made an officer. Is it not that, reverend sir?"

The little Obi bowed his head in the affirmative, and Biassou continued:

"This brother of whom you are jealous, and whom I have appointed executioner, understands Latin!"

He turned to the new executioner:

"Is it not true, my friend? Prove to this blockhead that you know more than he does. What is the meaning of *Dominus vobiscum*?"

The unhappy half-caste, roused from his gloomy reverie by the dreaded voice, raised his head, and though his brain was still troubled by the cowardly murder that he had just committed, terror compelled him to be obedient. There was something pitiable in his manner, as this man searched in his mind for some remembrance of his schooldays, in the midst of his terrible feelings and remorse he repeated, in the tone of a child saying its lessons:

"*Dominus vobiscum* . . . that means, 'May the Lord be with you.'"

"*Et cum spiritu tuo*," added the mysterious Obi, solemnly.

"*Amen*," repeated Biassou. Then, resuming his angry tone, and mingling with his reproaches some bad Latin phrases, after the manner of Sganarelle, to impress the negroes with the superior attainments of their chief,

he cried to the ambitious negro, "Go to the rear ranks, *sursum corda* ! Never in the future attempt to enter the places of those who know Latin *orate fratres*, or I will have you hung ! *Bonus, bona, bonum* !"

The astonished and terrified negro returned to the ranks, shamefully bowing his head in the midst of the hisses of his comrades, who were indignant at his presumption, and impressed with the deep learning of their general.

There was a burlesque side to this scene, which inspired me with a very high idea of Biassou's administrative capabilities. The ridiculous means he had used with so much success (Toussaint-Louverture used the same bluff with the same results a little later), to repress the ambitious, always so dangerous in an army of rebels, gave me an idea of the stupidity of the negroes and the shrewdness of their chief.

XXXVI.

Meanwhile the almuerzo (breakfast) hour of Biassou had now arrived. There was placed before the *mariscal de campo de su magestad catolica* a large shell of a turtle, in which smoked a species of *ollapodrida* seasoned with bacon, in which turtle flesh took the place of *carnero* (lamb), and a mess of gray peas, *garganzas*. An enormous carib cabbage floated on the surface of the *puchero* (stew). On either side of the shell, which served as a pot or a soup-tureen, were two cocoanut shells, full of dried raisins and *sandías* (water-melons), yams and figs; this was the *postre* (dessert). A loaf of maize bread; and a bottle of wine, bound round with a tarred string, completed the feast. Biassou took from his pocket a few heads of garlic and rubbed his bread with them; then, without ordering the bleeding form before him to be carried away, he began to eat, inviting Rigaud to do the same. Biassou's appetite was something terrible.

The Obi did not join their repast; like others in his profession, I could easily understand

that he never took anything in public, to induce a belief amongst the negroes that he was supernatural and that he lived entirely without food.

During breakfast, Biassou ordered one of his aides-de-camp to order the march past to commence, and the different corps began to defile past in fairly good order before the grotto. The negroes of Morne-Rouge were the first; there were about four thousand of them, divided into companies commanded by chiefs, decorated, as I have already said, with scarlet breeches and sashes. These tall and powerful negroes; carried guns, axes and sabres; a great many had bows and arrows, and javelins rudely made from other arms. They carried no standard, and moved past in mournful silence.

Seeing this band pass, Biassou whispered to Rigaud, in French:

“When will Blanchelande’s and Rouvray’s shot and shell free me from these bandits of Morne-Rouge? I hate them, they are nearly all of them *congos*, and they only believe in killing in open battle; they follow the example of their imbecile chief, of their idol Bug-Jargal, a young fool, who plays at being generous and magnanimous. You do not know him, Rigaud, and I hope you never will. The whites have taken him prisoner, and they

may perhaps rid me of him, as they did of Bouckmann."

"Speaking of Bouckmann," answered Rigaud, "there are the negroes of Macaya just passing, and I see in their ranks the negro whom Jean-François sent to you with the news of Bouckmann's death. Do you know that that man might upset all the prophecies of the Obi, if he were to say that he had been kept for more than half an hour at the outposts, and that he had told me the news before you sent for him?"

"*Diabolo!*" answered Biassou, "you are right, my friend; this man's mouth must be shut. Wait a bit."

Then raising his voice:

"Macaya," he called. The leader of the division left the ranks, and approached the general with the stock of his firelock reversed, in token of respect.

"Make that man who does not belong to your division leave his rank and come forward."

It was Jean-François' messenger. Macaya speedily brought him before the general, who at once assumed that appearance of anger which he knew so well how to simulate.

"Who are you?" cried he.

"General, I am a black."

"*Caramba!* I can see that well enough; but what is your name?"

"My nickname is Vavelan, my patron saint with the happy is Sabas, deacon and martyr, whose feast is on the twentieth day before the Nativity of our Lord."

Biassou interrupted him:

"How dare you present yourself on parade, amidst shining muskets and white cross-belts, with your sword without a sheath, your breeches torn, and your feet muddy?"

"General," answered the negro, "it is not my fault. I was dispatched by the Grand-Admiral, Jean-François, to bring you the news of the death of the chief of the English negroes, Bouckmann: and if my clothes are torn and my feet bemired, it is because I have run, without stopping to take breath, to bring you the news as soon as possible, but they detained me at the camp, and"

Biassou frowned.

"That is not the question, *gavache*! but of your audacity to appear in the review in this disorder. Commend your soul to Saint Sabas, deacon and martyr, your patron. Go and get yourself shot!"

Here I had another proof of the moral power of Biassou over the insurgents. The unfortunate man who was ordered to go and get himself executed did not utter a

protest; he bowed his head, crossed his arms on his breast, saluted his pitiless judge three times, and after having knelt before the Obi, who gave him plenary absolution, he left the cavern. A few minutes afterwards a volley of musketry announced to Biassou that the negro had obeyed, was no more.

The general freed from all sources of uneasiness, turned to Rigaud, a gleam of pleasure in his eye, and gave a triumphant chuckle which seemed to say—"Admire me!"¹⁰

XXXVII.

Meanwhile the march continued. This army, which had presented so curious a spectacle in camp, had a no less extraordinary appearance under arms. Sometimes a horde of almost naked negroes would come along armed with clubs and tomahawks, marching, like mere savages, to the notes of a goat's horn; then would come regiments of mulattoes, dressed in the English or Spanish manner, well armed and disciplined, regulating their pace by the roll of the drum; then a band of negresses and their children carrying forks and spits, then some tag-rag bent under the weight of an old musket without lock or barrel; *griotes* with their feathered aprons, *griots* dancing with hideous contortions, and singing incoherent airs to the accompaniment of guitars, tomtoms, and balafos. This strange procession was from time to time, broken by detachments of dwarfs, priests, sacatras, Mamelukes, quadroons, free mulattoes, or wandering hordes of escaped slaves with a proud look of liberty on their faces and shining muskets, dragging in their ranks well-filled wagons, or some

artillery taken from the whites, which were looked on more as trophies than as military engines, and yelling out at the top of their voices the songs of Grand-Pré and Ou-Nassé. Above their heads floated flags, banners, and standards of every form, color, and device—white, red, tricolor, with the lilies, with the cap of liberty, bearing inscriptions—*Death to Priests and Nobles ! Long live Religion ! Liberty and Equality ! Long live the King ! Down with the Metropolis ! Viva España ! No more Tyrant !* etc. ;—a confusion of sentiments which showed that the insurgents were a mere crowd collected together, with ideas as different as were the men who composed it.

On passing in their turn before the cave, the companies drooped their banners, and Biassou returned the salute. He addressed every band either in praise or censure, and each word that dropped from his mouth was received by his men with fanatical respect or superstitious dread.

The crowd of savage soldiery passed away at last. I confess that the sight of so many brigands which had distracted me at first ended by wearying me. The sun went down as the last ranks filed away, and its rays cast a copper-colored hue upon the granite mountains to the eastward.

XXXVIII.

Biassou seemed in a reverie. When the review was concluded, his last orders had been given, and the insurgents had retired to the huts, he condescended to address me again.

"Young man," said he, "you have now had the means of judging of my power and genius; the time has now arrived for you to take an account of it to Léogri."

"It is not my fault that he has not had it earlier," answered I, coldly.

"You are right," replied Biassou. He then paused, as if to note what the effect would be upon me of what he was going to say, and then added, "But it will depend upon yourself whether he gets it or not."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed I, in astonishment.

"Yes," replied Biassou, "that your life depends upon yourself, and that you can save it if you will."

This sudden paroxysm of pity—the first, and no doubt the last, which had ever

possessed Biassou—surprised me much. The Obi, surprised as much as I, was seated on the steps where he had so long kept his position after the manner of the Hindoo fakir. He placed himself face to face with the general, addressing him in angry tones.

“Que dice el excelentísimo señor mariscal de campo?” (What are you saying, excellent general?) Have you forgotten your promise? Neither God nor you can dispose of this life, for it belongs to me.”

At that instant with this irritated accent I thought that I recognized the little man; but it was but a fleeting recollection, and in a moment had passed away.

Biassou got up from his seat without betraying any anger, spoke for a few moments in whispers to the Obi, and pointed to the black flag which I had already remarked, and after a little more conversation, the sorcerer nodded in sign of assent. Both of them then went back to their former positions.

“Listen to me,” said the general, drawing from his pocket the other dispatch from Jean-François. “Things are going ill. Bouckmann has been killed in battle. The whites have slaughtered more than two thousand blacks in the district of Cul-de-Sac. The colonists are continuing to establish and to

fortify military posts. By our own folly we lost the chance of taking Cap, and it will be long before another occasion will present itself. The eastern side of our line of march is cut by a river, and the whites have defended the passage by a pontoon battery and a fortified camp. On the south side they have planted artillery on the mountainous road called the Haut-du-Cap; they have defended it by troops of artillery. The position is defended by a strong stockade, at which all the inhabitants have labored, and in front of it are strong *chevaux-de-frise*. Cap, therefore, is beyond our reach. Our ambush in the ravines of Dompte-Mulâtre was a failure. To add to all these misfortunes, the Siamese fever, which depopulated Jean-François' army, has devastated our camps. In consequence, the Grand Admiral of France thinks, and we agree with him, that we should treat with the Governor Blanchelande and the Colonial Assembly. Here is the letter that we have addressed to the Assembly on this matter. Listen!

“GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF DEPUTIES :

“In the great misfortunes which have afflicted this great and important colony, we have also been enveloped, and there remains nothing for us to say in justification of our conduct. One day you will render us the justice that our conduct merits. We ought to be

included in the general pardon that King Louis XVI. has proclaimed for all.

“ ‘Accordingly, as the King of Spain is a good king, who treats us well, and has *testified it to us by rewards*, we shall continue to serve him with zeal and devotion.

“ ‘We see by the law of September 28, 1791, that the National Assembly and the king have agreed to definitely settle the status of slaves, and the political situation of people of color. We will defend the decrees of the National Assembly, invested with the requisite formalities, with the last drop of our blood. It would likewise be most interesting to us if you would *declare*, by an order sanctioned by your general, that it is your intention to investigate the condition of the slaves. Knowing that they are the objects of your solicitude, we, their chiefs, feel sure they will be satisfied and in a short time peace will be restored.

“ ‘Do not count, gentlemen deputies, upon our consenting to take up arms for the revolutionary Assemblies. We are the subjects of three kings—the King of Congo, the born master of all the blacks; the King of France, who represents our fathers; and the King of Spain, who represents our mothers. These three kings are descendants of those who, conducted by a star, worshiped the Man of God. If we serve the Assemblies, we might be forced to take up arms and to make war against our brothers, the subjects of those three kings to whom we have sworn fidelity.

“ ‘And, besides, we do not know what is meant by the will of the nation, seeing that the people rule, we have not executed that of the king. The Prince of France loves us; the King of Spain never ceases to help us. We aid them—they aid us; it is the cause of humanity; and, besides, if these kings should fail us we could soon *enthroned a king*.

“ ‘Such are our intentions, nevertheless, we now consent to make peace.

“ ‘*Signed*, JEAN-FRANÇOIS, General ; BIASSOU, Brigadier ; DESPREZ, MANZEAU, TOUSSAINT, AUBERT, Commissaires ; *ad hoc*.’ ”

[It seems that this ridiculously characteristic letter was really sent to the Assembly.]

“ ‘You see,” said Biassou, after he had read this piece of negro diplomacy, every word of which has remained imprinted on my memory, “you see that our intentions are peaceable ; this is what we want you to do : neither Jean-François nor I have been brought up in the schools of the whites, or learned the niceties of their language. We know how to fight, but not how to write. Now we do not wish that there should be anything in our letter to the Assembly at which our former masters could laugh. You seem to have learned those frivolous accomplishments in which we are lacking. Correct any faults you may find in this dispatch, so that it may excite no derision amongst the whites, and at this price I will give you your life !”

This proposition of becoming the corrector of Biassou’s faults of spelling and composition was too repugnant to my pride for me to hesitate for a moment ; and besides, what did I care for life ? I declined his offer.

He appeared surprised.

"What!" exclaimed he, "you prefer death to scrawling a few marks with a pen on a piece of parchment?"

"Yes," replied I.

My determination seemed to embarrass him. After a few moments of thought he again addressed me.

"Listen, young fool. I am less obstinate than you are. I give you until to-morrow evening, up to the setting of the sun, when you shall again be brought before me. Think well then, before you refuse to obey my wishes. Adieu. Let night bring reflection to you. Remember, with us death is not simply death."

The sense of the last words, accompanied by a frightful grin, was not equivocal, and the awful tortures which it was Biassou's greatest pleasure to inflict upon his prisoners came to my mind.

"Candi," continued Biassou, "remove the prisoner, and give him in charge to the men of Morne-Rouge. I wish him to live for another day, and perhaps my other soldiers would not have the patience to let him do so."

The mulatto Candi, who commanded the guard, caused my arms to be bound behind my back. A soldier took hold of the end of the cord, and we left the grotto.

XXXIX.

When any extraordinary events, anxieties or catastrophes, intrude themselves suddenly into a life up to that period peaceful and happy, these unexpected emotions, these strokes of fortune, rudely interrupt the repose of the soul which lay dreaming in the monotony of prosperity. Misfortune which comes to one in this manner does not seem to be an awakening, but only a dream. For those who have always been happy, despair begins with stupor. Unexpected misery is like a torpedo, it shatters, but benumbs; and the frightful light which it suddenly throws before our eyes is not daylight. Men, acts, and things, at that time pass before us like a fantastic apparition, and move along as if in a dream. Everything in the horizon of our life is changed, atmosphere and perspective; but it still goes on for a long time before our eyes have lost that sort of luminous image of past happiness which follows them, and interposes without cessation between it and the sombre present, changing the color and giving to it, I do not know what, false reality. Then

everything that is, appears to be unreal and ridiculous, and we can scarcely believe in our own existence, because we find nothing around us that formerly used to compose our life, and we cannot understand how all can have gone away without taking us with it, and why nothing of our life remains to us. Were this strained position of the soul to continue long, it would disturb the equilibrium of the brain and become madness—a state happier perhaps than that which remains, for life then is nothing but a vision of past misfortune, acting like a ghost.

XL.

Gentlemen, I hardly know why I lay before you my thoughts. They are not those which you understand, or can be made to understand. You must experience them. I have proved them. But such was the state of my mind when the guards of Biassou handed me over to the negroes of Morne-Rouge. I appeared as if one body of phantoms passed me over to another, and without opposing any resistance I permitted them to bind me by the middle to a tree. They then gave me some boiled potatoes, which I ate with the mechanical instinct that God grants to man even in the midst of overwhelming thought.

Meanwhile darkness had now come on ; my guards took refuge in their huts, with the exception of half a dozen who remained with me sitting or lying before a large fire that they had lighted to keep off the cold night air. In a few moments they were all buried in profound sleep.

The state of physical weakness into which I had fallen caused my thoughts to wander in a strange manner. I thought of those calm and

peaceful days which, but a few weeks ago, I had passed with Marie, without being able to foresee in the future any possibility other than continued happiness. I compared them with the day that had just expired, a day in which so many strange events had occurred as almost to make me doubt their existence, when I had been three times condemned to death, and remained under sentence. I thought of my future, which consisted only of the morrow, and which offered nothing but misfortune, and a death happily near at hand. I seemed to be the victim of some terrible nightmare. I asked myself if all that had happened was real; was I really in the power of the sanguinary Biassou, was my Marie lost to me forever? and this prisoner, guarded by six savages, bound and condemned to certain death, this prisoner, seen by the glare of the brigands' fire, was it really I? In spite of all my efforts to repel them, the thoughts of Marie would force themselves upon me. In anguish I thought of her fate; I strained my bonds in my efforts to break them, and to fly to her succor, ever hoping that the terrible dream would pass away, and that God would not permit all the horrors that I dreaded to fall upon the angel who had been given me for my wife. In my sad pre-occupation the thought of Pierrot returned to

me, and rage nearly took away my senses; the pulses of my temples throbbed nearly to bursting; I hated him, I cursed him; I despised myself for having ever had friendship for Pierrot at the same time I had felt love for Marie; and, without caring to seek for the motive which had urged him to cast himself into the waters of Grande-Riviere, I wept because he had escaped me. He was dead; I was about to die; and the only thing that I regretted was that I had been unable to wreak my vengeance upon him.

All these thoughts passed through my brain during the state of semi-somnolency into which my weakness had plunged me. I do not know how long it lasted, but I was suddenly aroused by a man's voice singing distinctly, but at some distance: "*Yo que soy contrabandista.*" Quivering with emotion I opened my eyes; all was dark, the negroes slept, the fire was dying. I could hear nothing more. I fancied that the voice must have been a dream, and my sleep-laden eyelids closed again. In a second I opened them; again I heard the voice singing sadly, but much nearer, this verse of a Spanish Romance:

*En los campos de Ocana,
Prisionero caí:
Me llevan à Cotadilla;
Desdichado fui.*

In the fields of Ocana
I became prisoner;
They took me to Cotadilla;
Unhappy was I!

This time it was not a dream. It *was* Pierrot's voice. A few moments elapsed, then it rose again through the silence and the gloom, and for the second time I heard the well-known air of "*Yo que soy contrabandista*." A dog ran eagerly to greet me, and rolled at my feet; it was Rask! I raised my eyes. A negro stood facing me, and the glimmer of the fire threw at the side of the dog his colossal shadow; it was Pierrot! The thirst for vengeance fired my brain; surprise rendered me motionless and dumb. I was not asleep. Could the dead return? This is not a dream but an apparition. I turned from him with horror. Seeing this, his head sank upon his breast.

"Brother," murmured he, in a low voice, "you promised that you would never doubt me when you heard me sing that song. Brother, tell me, have you forgotten your promise?"

Rage restored the power of speech to me.

"Monster," exclaimed I, "do I find you at last! Butcher, murderer of my uncle, ravisher of Marie, dare you call me your brother? Stop, do not approach me!"

I forgot that I was too securely tied to make the slightest movement and glanced to my left side as though to seek my sword. My intention did not escape him. He continued in a sorrowful tone of voice—

“No, no, I will not come near you—you are unhappy, I pity you; you, you, have no pity for me, though I am much more wretched than you are.”

I shrugged my shoulders; he understood this silent reply. He looked at me in a dreamy manner.

“Yes, you have lost much; but, believe me, I have lost more than you have.”

But the sound of our conversation had aroused the six negroes who guarded me. Perceiving a stranger they leaped to their feet and seized their weapons; but as soon as they recognized the intruder they uttered a cry of surprise and joy, and cast themselves at his feet, striking the ground with their foreheads.

But the homage that the negroes rendered to Pierrot, the caresses which Rask bestowed both upon myself and his master, who gazed at me with uneasiness, as though astonished at my cold reception, made no impression upon me at the moment. I was boiling over with passion, and maddened at the bonds that retained me.

“Oh!” I exclaimed, crying with anger under the chains which held me, “Oh! how unhappy I am! I was grieving because I thought that this wretch had committed suicide. I thought him dead, and I was deprived of my vengeance; now he is here to mock me; he is here, living under my eyes, and I am powerless to stab him. Oh! who will free me from these accursed cords?”

Pierrot turned to the negroes, who were still prostrate before him.

“Comrades,” said he, “release the prisoner!”

XLI.

He was promptly obeyed. With the greatest eagerness my six guards cut asunder the ropes that confined me. I rose up free, but I remained motionless, for surprise rooted me to the spot.

“That is not all,” said Pierrot, and snatching a dagger from one of the negroes, he handed it to me, saying: “You can now have your wish; Heaven would not be pleased should I dispute your right to dispose of my life. Three times you have preserved it. It is yours, strike now; if you wish, strike!”

There was no sign of anger or of bitterness in his face; he appeared resigned and mournful.

The very vengeance offered to me by the man with whom I had so much longed to stand face to face, prevented my seizing the opportunity. I felt that all my hatred for Pierrot, all my love for Marie, could not induce me to commit a cowardly murder; besides, however damning appearances might be, yet a voice from the depths of my heart warned me that no criminal, no guilty man, would thus dare to stand before me and

brave my vengeance. Shall I confess it to you, there was a certain imperious fascination about this extraordinary being which conquered me in spite of myself; I pushed aside the dagger he offered to me.

“Wretch!” cried I, “I wish to kill you in fair fight, but not to assassinate you. Defend yourself!”

“Defend myself,” replied he, in tones of astonishment, “and against whom?”

“Against me!”

He made a sign. “Against you! that is the only thing in which I cannot obey you. Do you see Rask? I could easily kill him, for he would let me do it; but I could not make him fight me, he would not understand me. I do not understand you; in your case I am Rask.”

He added, after a short silence:

“I see the gleam of hate in your eyes, as you once saw it in mine. I know that you have suffered much, that your uncle has been murdered, your plantations burned, your friends slaughtered—yes, they have plundered your house, and devastated your inheritance; but it was not I, it was my people. Listen, I one day told you that your people had done me much injury, you said that you must not be blamed for the acts of others. What was my reply?”

His face grew brighter as he awaited my reply, evidently expecting that I should embrace him. I regarded him with an angry look.

"You disdain all responsibility as to the acts of your people, but you say nothing about what you have yourself done."

"What have I done?" asked he.

I stepped up close to him, and in a voice of thunder I demanded, "Where is Marie! what have you done with Marie?"

At this question a cloud passed over his face; he seemed momentarily embarrassed. At last he spoke. "*Maria!*" said he, "yes; you are right . . . but too many ears listen to us here."

His embarrassment, the words, "You are right," raised a hell of jealousy in my heart. I saw he eluded my question. Still he gazed upon me with a perfectly open countenance, and in a voice trembling with emotion said:

"Do not suspect me, I implore you. Besides, I will tell you everything. Love me, as I love you, with perfect trust."

He paused to mark the effect of his words, and then added tenderly, "May I not again call you brother?"

But my angry jealousy had resumed its violence, his friendly words seemed to me hypocritical, and only served to exasperate me.

“Dare you recall to me those days, monster of ingratitude?” I exclaimed.

He interrupted me. Tears were shining in his eyes.

“It is not I who am ungrateful.”

“Well, then, speak,” I continued, passionately. “What have you done with Marie?”

“Not here, not here,” answered he, “other ears than ours listen to our words. Besides, you would not believe my word, and time presses. The day has come, and you must be removed from here. Listen, all is at an end, since you doubt me, and you would have done better to finish me with the dagger, but wait a little before you take what you call your vengeance ; I must first free you. Come with me to find Biassou.”

His manner, both in speaking and acting, concealed a mystery which I could not understand. In spite of all my prejudices against the man, his voice always made my heart vibrate. In listening to him I did not know what power subjugated me. I found myself hesitating between vengeance and pity, between distrust and blind confidence.

I followed him.

XLII.

We left the camp of the negroes of Morne-Rouge. I was astonished at walking free in this barbarous camp, where each man seemed to thirst for my blood. Far from seeking to bar our progress, the negroes and the mulattoes prostrated themselves on all sides, with exclamations of surprise, joy and respect. I was ignorant what rank Pierrot held in the army of the insurgents; but I remembered the influence that he used to exercise over his companions in slavery, and this appeared to me to account for the respect with which he was treated by his comrades in rebellion.

On our arrival at the guard before the grotto of Biassou, the mulatto Candi, their chief, advanced before us, with threatening gestures, demanding how we dared approach so near the general; but when he came near enough to recognize the features of Pierrot he hurriedly removed his gold-laced cap, as though terrified at his own audacity, bowed to the ground, and introduced us into Biassou's presence, with a thousand apologies, to which Pierrot only answered by a disdainful gesture.

The respect with which the simple negro soldiers had treated Pierrot excited my surprise very little, but seeing Candi, one of the principal officers, humiliate himself thus before my uncle's slave, I began to ask myself who this man could be whose power was illimitable. How much more astonished was I, then, when I saw the general, who was alone when we entered, and was quietly enjoying his *calalou*, rise precipitately, out of respect to Pierrot, but concealing disappointment and surprise under the appearance of profound respect, also bow humbly to my companion, and offer him his mahogany throne. Pierrot declined it.

"Jean Biassou," said he, "I have not come to take your place, but simply to ask a favor at your hands."

"*Alteza*," answered Biassou, redoubling his obeisances, "you know well that all Jean Biassou has is yours, and that you can dispose of all that belongs to Biassou, of Jean Biassou himself."

This title of *Alteza*, which is equivalent to that of *Highness*, given to Pierrot by Biassou, also increased my astonishment.

"I do not ask for so much," replied Pierrot, quickly; "I only ask you for the life and liberty of this prisoner."

He pointed to me. Biassou appeared embarrassed, but he speedily recovered himself.

"Your servant is in despair, *Alteza*. You ask of him, to his great regret, more than he can grant. This prisoner is not Jean Biassou's, does not belong to Jean Biassou, and Jean Biassou has nothing to do with him."

"What do you mean?" asked Pierrot, in severe tones. "To whom does he belong then? Is there another power here than you?"

"Alas! yes, *Alteza*."

"Who is it?"

"My army."

The sly and obsequious manner in which Biassou eluded the frank and haughty questions of Pierrot, showed that he was determined to accord only the respect which he was compelled.

"What!" exclaimed Pierrot, "your army! And do you not command it?"

Biassou, reserving his advantage, without giving up, however, his attitude of inferiority, replied with every appearance of sincerity:

"*Sû Alteza* (Does your Highness) really think that we can command men who are in insurrection because they will not obey?"

I cared too little for my life to break the silence, but having seen the day before the despotic authority of Biassou over his men, I could have contradicted his assertions, and laid bare his duplicity. Pierrot continued:

“Ah, well! if you have no authority over your army, and if your soldiers are your masters, what reason can they have for hating your prisoner?”

“Bouckmann has been killed by the government troops,” answered Biassou, endeavoring to conceal his sardonic smile under a mask of sorrow, “and my men are determined to avenge upon this white the death of the chief of the Jamaica negroes. They wish to compare trophy against trophy, and that the head of this young officer should serve as a counterpoise to the head of Bouckmann in the scales in which the *bon Dieu* weighs both parties.”

“How can you suggest these horrible reprisals? Listen to me, Jean Biassou: it is these cruelties that ruin our just cause. Prisoner, as I was in the camp of the whites, from which I have managed to escape, I had not heard of the death of Bouckmann until you told me. It is the just punishment of Heaven for his crime. I will tell you another piece of news. Jeannot, the negro chief who served as a guide to draw the white troops into the ambush of Dompte-Mulatre, Jeannot, also is dead. You know—do not interrupt me, Biassou—that he rivaled you and Bouckmann in his atrocities; now pay attention to this, it was not the thunderbolt of Heaven,

nor the bullets of the whites, that struck him—it was Jean-François himself who ordered this act of justice to be performed.”

Biassou, who had listened with an air of gloomy respect, uttered an exclamation of surprise. At this moment Rigaud entered, bowed respectfully to Pierrot, and whispered in Biassou’s ear. The murmur of many voices was heard in the camp. Pierrot continued :

“Yes, Jean-François, who had no fault except a preposterous love of luxury and show, whose carriage with its six horses takes him every day to hear mass at the Grande-Riviere, Jean-François himself has put a stop to the crimes of Jeannot. In spite of the cowardly entreaties of the brigand, who clung in despair to the knees of the Priest of Marmelade, who attended him in his last moments, he was shot beneath the very tree upon which he used to hang his living victims upon iron hooks. Biassou, think of this ! Why these massacres which provoke the whites to cruelty ? Why use these juggleries which only tend to excite the passions of our unhappy comrades, already too much exasperated ? There is at Trou-Coffi a mulatto impostor, called Romaine the Prophet, who is in command of a fanatical band of negroes ; he profanes the holy sacraments of the mass, he pretends that he

is in direct communication with the Virgin, from whom he has the oracles by putting his head in the tabernacle: and he urges on his men to murder and pillage in the name of Marie!"

There was a more tender inflection in the voice of Pierrot as he uttered this name than even religious respect would have warranted. I do not know why, but I felt annoyed and irritated at it.

"Ah, well! and you," continued the slave, "you have in your camp some Obi, I hear—some impostor like this Romaine the Prophet. I well know that having to lead an army composed of men from all countries, from all families, of all colors, a common bond is necessary; but can it be found nowhere save in ferocious fanaticism and ridiculous superstition? Believe me, Biassou, the white men are not so cruel as we are. I have seen many planters protect the lives of their slaves; I am not ignorant that in some cases it was not the life of a man, but a sum of money, but at any rate their interest gave them the appearance of a virtue. Do not let us be less merciful than they are, for it is our interest to be so. Will our cause be more holy and more just because we exterminate the women, slaughter the children, and burn the colonists in their own houses? These, however, are

every-day occurrences. Answer me, Biassou : must the traces of our progress be always marked by a line of blood and fire ?”

He ceased ; the fire of his glance, the accent of his voice, gave to his words a force of conviction and authority which it is impossible for me to imitate. Like a fox caught by a lion, with eyes lowered, Biassou seemed to seek for some means of escape from the power that constrained him. Whilst he vainly sought for a pretext, Rigaud the chief of the negroes of Cayes, who the evening before had calmly watched the horrors that had been perpetrated in his presence, seemed to be shocked at the picture that Pierrot had drawn, and exclaimed with a hypocritical affectation of grief :

“Great heavens ! how terrible is a nation when roused to fury.”

XLIII.

Meanwhile, the confusion in the camp appeared to increase, to the great uneasiness of Biassou. I heard afterwards that it was caused by the negroes of Morne-Rouge, who hurried from one end of the camp to the other, announcing the return of my liberator, and declaring their intention of supporting him in whatever had been his object in coming to Biassou's camp. Rigaud had informed the generalissimo of this circumstance; and it was the fear of a fatal division in the camp that prompted Biassou to make some sort of concession to the wishes of Pierrot.

"*Alteza*," remarked he, with an air of injured innocence, "if we are hard on the whites, you are severe on us. You are wrong in accusing me of being the cause of the torrent, for it drags us along with it; but *que podria hacer ahora* (what can I do now) that will please you?"

"I have already told you, *Señor Biassou*," answered Pierrot; "let me take this prisoner away with me."

Biassou remained for a few moments silent, as though in deep thought; then putting on an expression of as great frankness as he was able, he answered:

"Come, *Alteza*, I wish to prove to you that I have every desire to please you. Permit me to have two words in private with the prisoner; he shall be free to follow you."

"Yes, if that is all," replied Pierrot.

His face, heretofore proud and distrustful, now glistened with delight. He moved away a few paces.

Biassou drew me to one side into a retired part of the cavern, and said in a low voice:

"I can only spare your life upon one condition; you know it; are you ready to fulfill it?"

He showed me Jean-François' dispatch. A consent appeared to me too humiliating.

"No!" answered I.

"Ah!" repeated he, with his sardonic chuckle. "Always as firm! You have great confidence, then, in your protector? Do you know who he is?"

"I do," answered I, quickly, "he is a monster, like you, only he is a greater hypocrite!"

He started back in astonishment, seeking to read in my glance if I spoke seriously.

"What!" exclaimed he, "do you not know him then?"

I replied disdainfully :

“I only know him as my uncle’s slave, and his name is Pierrot.”

Again Biassou smiled bitterly.

“Ha ! ha ! that indeed is strange ! he asks for your life and liberty, and you call him a ‘monster like myself !’ ”

“What matters that ?” I answered ; “if I do gain a little liberty, it is not to save my own life, but to take his !”

“What is that ?” asked Biassou. “You seem to speak sincerely, and I cannot think that you would trifle with your life. There is something beneath all this that I do not understand. You are protected by a man that you hate ; he pleads for your life, and you wish his death. Besides, it matters little to me. You desire a short spell of freedom—it is all that I can give you. I will leave you free to follow him, but swear to me, by your honor, that you will return to me and reconstitute yourself my prisoner two hours before the sun sets. You are a Frenchman, are you not ?”

Shall I say it, gentlemen ? Life was a burden to me ; besides I hated the idea of owing it to Pierrot, for every circumstance pointed him out as an object of my just hatred. I do not think for a moment that Biassou (who did not easily permit his prey

to escape him) would allow me to go free except upon his own conditions. I only desired a few hours' liberty which I could devote to discovering the fate of my beloved Marie, before my death. My word, which Biassou, full of confidence in French honor, asked, was a sure and easy way of gaining a day. I gave it.

After having obtained it, the chief approached Pierrot.

"*Alteza*," said Biassou, in obsequious tones, "the white prisoner is at your disposal; you can take him away, he is free to accompany you."

I had never seen so much happiness in Pierrot's eyes.

"Thanks, Biassou!" cried he, extending his hand, "thanks! You have rendered me a service which places me entirely at your disposal. Remain in command of my brethren of Morne-Rouge until my return."

Then he turned towards me.

"Since you are free," cried he, "come!"

And with a strange earnestness he drew me away with him.

Biassou looked after us with blank astonishment, which was even perceptible through the respectful farewell that he took of Pierrot.

XLIV.

I was longing to be alone with Pierrot. His embarrassment when I had questioned him as to the fate of Marie, the ill-concealed tenderness with which he had dared to pronounce her name, had made those feelings of hatred and jealousy which had sprung up in my heart take far deeper root than at the time I saw him bearing away through the flames of Fort Galifet, her whom I could scarcely call my wife. What did I care for the generous indignation with which he had reproved the cruelties of Biassou, the trouble which he had taken to preserve my life, and the curious manner which marked all his words and actions? What cared I for the mystery that appeared to envelop him, which brought him living before my eyes, when I thought I had witnessed his death? Which proved him to be a prisoner of the white troops when I believed that he lay buried in the depths of Grande-Riviere, which changed this slave to a highness, the prisoner to a liberator? Of all these incomprehensible

things the only one which was clear to me, was that Marie had been carried off; a crime to punish, an outrage to avenge. However strange were the events that had passed under my eyes, they were not sufficient to shake my determination, and I had waited with impatience for the moment when I could compel my rival to explain all. That moment had at last arrived.

We had passed through crowds of negroes, who cast themselves on the ground as we passed, and exclaimed in tones of surprise: "*Miraculo! ya no esta prisionero!*" ("A miracle! he is no longer a prisoner!") But whether they referred to Pierrot or to me I did not know. We had gained the outskirts of the camp; as the rocks and trees concealed our view, we lost sight of Biassou's outposts; Rask, in good humor, ran before and then behind; Pierrot followed with rapid strides; I suddenly stopped him.

"Listen to me," cried I, "it is useless to go any farther—the ears that you dreaded can no longer listen to us. Speak, what have you done with Marie?"

Concentrated emotion made my voice tremble. He gazed upon me kindly.

"Always the same question!" said he.

"Yes, always," returned I, furiously; "always! I will put that question to you as you

draw your last breath, or as I utter my last sigh. Where is Marie?"

"Can nothing, then, drive away your doubts of my loyalty? You shall know all soon."

"Soon, monster!" repeated I, "it is now that I want to know. Where is Marie? Where is Marie? Do you hear? Answer, or stake your life against mine. Defend yourself!"

"I have already told you," answered he, sadly, "that that is impossible; the stream will not struggle against its source; my life, which you have three times saved, cannot contend against yours. Besides, even if I wished it the thing is impossible. We have but one dagger between us."

As he spoke, he drew the weapon from his girdle and offered it to me.

"Take it," said he.

I was beside myself, I seized the dagger and placed the point on his breast. He never attempted to move.

"Wretch," cried I, "do not force me to murder you. I will plunge this blade into your heart if you do not at once tell me where my wife is."

He replied without anger:

"You are the master. I implore you with clasped hands to grant me one hour of life, and to follow me. You doubt him who thrice has owed his life to you, and whom you once

called brother? But, listen : if in one hour you still doubt me, you shall be at liberty to kill me. That will be time enough. You see that I do not attempt to resist you. I conjure you in the name of Maria," he added slowly, "of your wife ; give me but another hour, I beg of you, not for my sake, but for yours !"

His voice had an intonation very soft and persuasive. Something seemed to warn me that what he said was true, that it was not interest of his life that had given to his voice this penetrating tenderness, this supplicating sweetness, but that he pleaded for me and not for himself. I yielded to that secret ascendancy which he exercised over me, and of which at that time I should have blushed to have confessed.

"Come," said I, slowly, "I will grant you one hour ; I will follow you."

And I offered him his dagger.

"No," answered he, "keep it ; you still distrust me. But come, let us lose no time."

XLV.

Again we started. Rask, who, during our conversation, had frequently tried to make us renew our journey by running toward us, and demanding, with a peculiar look, why we were stopping, bounded joyously before us. We plunged into a virgin forest. At length, after about half an hour, we came out upon a pretty green savanna watered by living springs and bordered by the primeval trees of the forest. Opening on the savanna was a cave, the gray face of which was shrouded by a mass of climbing plants, the clematis, the lianas, and the jasmine. Rask ran towards it barking, but at a sign from Pierrot he became silent, and without a word the latter took me by the hand and led me to the entrance of the cave.

A woman, with her back towards the light, was seated on a mat in this grotto. At the sound of our steps she turned. Friends, it was Marie !

She wore the same white dress that she had on the day of our marriage, and the wreath of orange blossoms was still on her head, the last virginal ornaments of my young wife, which

my hands had not taken from her forehead. She perceived me, recognized me, and with a cry threw herself into my arms, fainting from joy and surprise. I was dismayed.

At her cry an old woman carrying a child in her arms hurried from an inner chamber formed in the depth of the cave. It was Marie's nurse, and my uncle's youngest child. Pierrot hastened to bring some water from the neighboring spring. He threw a few drops in Marie's face ; she speedily recovered ; she opened her eyes.

"Leopold," she exclaimed, "my Leopold!"

"Marie!" cried I, and the rest of my words were stifled in a kiss.

"Not before me, for pity's sake!" cried a voice, in accents of agony.

We looked round, it came from Pierrot. He was there, tortured by seeing our caresses. His bosom heaved, a cold perspiration bedewed his forehead. Every limb quivered. Suddenly he hid his face in his hands, and fled from the grotto repeating in tones of anguish : "Not before me!"

Marie half raised herself in my arms, and following his retreating form with her eyes, exclaimed :

"Great Heaven ! Leopold, our happiness seems to trouble him, can it be that he loves me?"

The exclamation of the slave had showed that he was my rival, but Marie's speech proved that he was also my trusty friend.

"Marie," answered I, as the wildest happiness mingled with the deepest regret filled my heart, "Marie, were you ignorant of it?"

"Until this moment I was," answered she, a blush overspreading her beautiful features. "What! he loves me. I never perceived it."

I clasped her to my bosom, in all the madness of happiness.

"I have recovered both wife and friend," I cried; "how happy am I, but how guilty! I doubted him!"

"What!" cried Marie, in surprise, "him! Pierrot! oh, yes, you have indeed been in fault. Twice you owe my life to him, and perhaps more than life," she added, casting down her eyes. "Without him the alligator would have devoured me, without him the negroes . . . it was Pierrot who rescued me from their hands, when they were about to send me to rejoin my unhappy father!"

She broke off her speech with a flood of tears.

"And why," asked I, "did not Pierrot send you back to Cap, to your husband?"

"He tried to do so," replied she, "but it was impossible, compelled as he was to conceal us both from the whites and the blacks,

his position was a most difficult one. Then, too, he was ignorant where you were. Some said that they had seen you killed, but Pierrot assured me that this was not the case, and I was very certain also for something would have warned me; and if you were dead, I should have died at the same time."

"Pierrot brought you here, then?" asked I.

"Yes, my Leopold, this solitary cave is known only to him. At the same time that he rescued me, he saved all that remained alive of our family, my little brother and my old nurse, and hid us here. I assure you the place is very nice; and now since the war which has destroyed the country, now that we are ruined, I should like to live here with you. Pierrot supplied all our wants. He used to come very often; he wore a plume of red feathers on his head. He used to console me by talking of you, and always assured me that I would be restored to you, but for the past three days I have not seen him, and I was beginning to be uneasy, when to-day he came back with you. Poor friend, he had been seeking for you, had he not?"

"Yes," replied I.

"But if so, how can he be in love with me? Are you sure of it?"

"Quite sure, now!" answered I. "It was he who was about to stab me beneath your

window, and spared me lest it should afflict you ; it was he who sang the love songs at the pavilion by the river."

"Truly!" exclaimed Marie, with naïve surprise, "he is your rival! and the wicked man with the wild marigolds is good Pierrot! I can hardly believe that. He was so respectful and humble to me, much more so than when he was our slave. It is true that sometimes he looked at me in a strange manner, but I attribute this sadness to our misfortunes. If you could only know with what tenderness he spoke of you, my Leopold. His friendship made him speak of you as much as my love did."

These explanations of Marie enchanted and yet grieved me. I felt how cruelly I had treated the noble-hearted Pierrot, and I felt all the force of his gentle reproach:—"It is not I who am ungrateful!"

At this instant Pierrot returned. His face was dark and gloomy, and he looked like a martyr returning from the place of torture, but yet retaining an air of triumph.

He came towards me, and pointing to the dagger in my belt, said:

"The hour has passed!"

"Hour! What hour?" asked I.

"The one you granted me ; it was necessary for me to have so much time allowed me in which to bring you here. Then I conjured

you to spare my life, now I pray you to take it away."

The most tender feelings of the heart, love, gratitude, and friendship, united then, at this moment to torture me. Unable to say a word, but sobbing bitterly, I cast myself at the feet of the slave. He raised me in haste.

"What are you doing?" cried he.

"I pay you the homage which I owe you, but I am no longer worthy of friendship such as yours. Your friendship cannot be pushed so far as to forgive me my ingratitude."

For a time his expression remained stern, he appeared to be undergoing a violent mental contest. He took a step towards me, drew back, he opened his mouth, but remained silent. The struggle was a short one; he opened his arms to embrace me, saying:

"May I now call you brother?"

My only reply was to cast myself on his breast.

After a short pause, he added:

"You are kind, but misfortune has rendered you unjust."

"I have found my brother once again," said I. "I am unfortunate no longer; but I have been very guilty."

"Guilty! brother. I also have been guilty, and more so than you. You are no longer unhappy; but I, I shall be so forever!"

XLVI.

The expression of pleasure which the renewal of our friendship had traced on his features, faded away and an appearance of deep grief once more pervaded them.

“Listen,” said he, coldly; “my father was the King of Kakongo. Each day he sat at the door of his hut and dispensed justice amongst his subjects, and after every judgment, according to the custom of the kings, he drank a full goblet of palm wine. We were happy and powerful. The Europeans came; it was from them that I learnt the accomplishments which you appeared to be surprised at my possessing. Their chief was a Spanish captain; he promised my father territories far greater than those he now ruled over, and white wives; my father followed him with his family . . . Brother, they sold us!”

The breast of the negro rose and fell, his eyes shot forth sparks of fire; and without seeming to know what he did, he broke in his powerful grasp a young medlar tree that stood beside him, then he continued without appearing to address me:

“The master of Kakongo in his turn had a master, and his son toiled as a slave in the furrows of Santo Domingo. They tore the young lion from his father, that they might the more easily tame him; they separated the wife from the husband, to bring more profit by uniting them with others. The little children looked for the mother who nursed them, for the father who bathed them in the torrents. In their place they found cruel masters and a sleeping place shared with the dogs!”

He was silent; his lips moved without speaking, his eyes were fixed and wild, at last he seized me roughly by the arm.

“Brother, do you hear? I have been sold to different masters like a beast of burden. Do you remember the punishment of Ogé? it was on that day that I saw my father. Listen:—he was on the wheel!”

I shuddered. He went on:

“My wife had been prostituted to the whites. Listen, brother, she is dead and demands vengeance. Must I tell you,” continued he, hesitatingly and lowering his eyes, “I was guilty, for I loved another. But let that pass. All my people urged me to deliver and avenge them. Rask brought me their messages. I could do nothing for them, I was fast in your uncle’s prison. The day upon which you obtained my release, I

hurried off to save my children from the power of a cruel master. I arrived.—Brother, the last of the grandchildren of the King of Kakongo had expired under the white man's blows! The others had preceded him."

He interrupted his recital, and asked me coldly:

"Brother, what would you have done?"

This frightful tale froze me with horror. I replied by a threatening gesture. He understood me, and with a bitter smile he continued:

"The slaves rose against their master, and punished the murder of my children. They chose me for their chief. You know the frightful excesses which brought on this rebellion. I heard that your uncle's slaves were on the point of rising. I arrived at Acul on the night upon which the insurrection broke out. You were away. Your uncle had been murdered in his bed. The negroes had already set fire to the plantation. Not being able to restrain them—for in destroying your uncle's property they thought that they were avenging my injuries—I determined to save the survivors of his family. I entered the fort by the breach that I had made. I intrusted your wife's nurse to a faithful negro. I had more trouble in saving your *Maria*. She had hurried to the burning portion of the fort to save the youngest of her

brothers, the sole survivor of the massacre. The blacks surrounded her; they were going to kill her. . . I burst upon them, and ordered them to leave her to my vengeance. They retired. I took your wife in my arms, I intrusted the child to Rask, and I bore them both away to this cavern, of which I alone knew the existence and the access. Brother, such was my crime."

More than ever overwhelmed with gratitude and remorse, I would again have thrown myself at Pierrot's feet. He stopped me with an offended air.

"Come, we must go," said he, a moment after, taking me by the hand, "take your wife, and let us leave this, all of us."

I asked him in surprise whither he was going to lead us.

"To the camp of the whites," answered he. "This retreat is no longer safe. To-morrow at break of day, the whites will attack Biassou's camp; the forest will assuredly be set on fire. Besides, we have no time to lose. Ten heads will have to answer for mine. We can hasten because you are free; we must hasten because I am not."

These words increased my surprise; I pressed him for an explanation.

"Have you not heard that Bug-Jargal was a prisoner?" replied he, impatiently.

“Yes ; but what has Bug-Jargal to do with you?”

In his turn he seemed astonished, and then in a grave voice he answered :

“I am Bug-Jargal.”

XLVII.

I had thought that nothing that related to this extraordinary man could have surprised me. It was not without astonishment that I saw an instant before the slave Pierrot transformed into an African king. My admiration reached its height, when I learned that he was the courageous and magnanimous Bug-Jargal, the chief of the insurgents of Morne-Rouge. I understood at last the respectful demeanor shown by all the rebels, even by Biassou, to Bug-Jargal, the King of Kakongo.

He did not notice the impression that his last words had made upon me.

"They told me," continued he, "that you were a prisoner in Biassou's camp, and I hastened to deliver you."

"Why did you tell me just now that you were not free?"

He glanced inquisitively at me, as though seeking my reason for putting this natural question.

"Listen," answered he. "This morning I was a prisoner in the hands of your friends. I heard a report in the camp that Biassou had

announced his intention of executing, before sunset to-day, a young prisoner named Leopold d'Auverney. They re-enforced my guards. I was informed that my execution would immediately follow yours, and that in the event of escape, ten of my comrades would suffer in my stead. So you see that I have no time to lose."

I still detained him.

"You made your escape then?" asked I.

"How else could I have been here? Was it not necessary to save you? Did I not owe you my life? Come, let us set out. We are an hour's march from the camp of the whites, and about the same distance from that of Biassou. See, the shadows of the cocoanut-trees are lengthening, and their round tops look on the grass like the egg of the giant condor. In three hours the sun will have set. Come, brother, time passes."

In three hours the sun will have set! These simple words froze my blood, like a funereal apparition. They recalled to my mind the fatal promise which bound me to Biassou. Alas! in seeing Marie again, I had not thought of our approaching eternal separation; I had been overwhelmed with my happiness, so much emotion had swept away my memory, and I had forgotten death in my happiness. The words of my friend recalled

everything to my mind. *In three hours the sun will have set!* It would take an hour to reach Biassou's camp. My duty was imperiously prescribed. The villain had my word, and it would never do to give him the chance of despising what he seemed still to put trust in—the honor of a Frenchman. The alternative was terrible. I chose that which was right; but I acknowledge, gentlemen, I hesitated a moment. Was I to blame?

XLVIII.

At last, with a deep sigh, I placed one hand in that of Bug-Jargal, and the other in that of Marie, who observed with anxiety the sadness that had overspread my features.

“ Bug-Jargal,” said I, struggling with emotion, “ I intrust to you the only being in the world that I love more than you—Marie. Return to the camp without me, for I cannot follow you.”

“ My God !” exclaimed Marie, hardly able to breathe, “ some new misfortune !”

Bug-Jargal trembled. A look of mingled sorrow and surprise passed over his eyes.

“ Brother, what is this that you say ?”

The terror that had seized upon Marie at the thought of the coming misfortune which her love for me had almost caused her to divine, made me determined to hide from her and to spare her the heart-rending good-byes. I leaned towards Bug-Jargal’s ear, and said, in a low voice :

“ I am a prisoner. I swore to Biassou that two hours before sunset I would once more

place myself in his power; in fact, I have promised to die!"

He jumped up angrily; his voice became piercing.

"The monster! This then was his motive for a secret interview with you:—it was to bind you with this promise. I ought to have distrusted this wicked Biassou. Why did I not foresee some treachery? He is not a black, he is a mulatto."

"What is this? What treachery? What promise?" said Marie, in an agony of terror. "Who is this Biassou?"

"Silence, silence," repeated I, in a low voice, to Bug-Jargal; "do not let us alarm Marie."

"Good," answered he in a sad voice. "But why did you consent to this promise? why did you give it? how could you consent?"

"I thought you were a wretch, that Marie was lost to me. What was life to me?"

"But a simple promise cannot bind you to this brigand."

"I gave my word of honor."

He did not seem to understand me.

"Your word of honor, what is that? You did not drink out of the same cup; you have not broken a ring together, or a branch of the red-blossomed maple?"

"No."

“Well, then, what did you say then? What binds you to him?”

“My honor!” I replied.

“I do not know what that signifies; nothing pledges you to Biassou. Come with us!”

“I cannot, my brother, I have promised.”

“No! you have not promised,” cried he, angrily; then raising his voice: “Sister, join with me and entreat your husband not to leave us. He wishes to return to the negro camp from which I rescued him, on the plea that he has promised his life to their chief Biassou.”

“What have you done?” cried I.

It was too late to stay the effects of the generous impulse that had prompted him to endeavor to save the life of his rival by the help of her he loved. Marie cast herself into my arms with a cry of anguish. Her hands clasped my neck, and she hung upon my breast, speechless and breathless.

“Oh, what does he say, my Leopold?” murmured she, feebly. “Is it not true that he is mistaken, and that he is deceiving me? It is not immediately after our reunion that you wish to leave me, and leave me to die? Answer me quickly or I shall die. You have no right to throw away your life, for you have given it to me. You would not leave me, never to see me again!”

"Marie," answered I, "do not believe it. I am going to leave, truly ; it is necessary ; but we shall meet again, in another place."

"In another place ! in another place !" she asked, in faltering accents, "Where?"

"In heaven," I answered ; for to this angel I could not lie.

Again she fainted, but this time it was from grief. The hour was passing ; my resolution was taken. I placed her in the arms of Bug-Jargal, whose eyes were full of tears.

"Nothing can keep you back, then," said he ; "I will add nothing to that which you see. How can you resist Maria ? For one word she has spoken I would have sacrificed the world, and you cannot even give up death for her."

"Honor !" answered I. "Farewell, Bug-Jargal, farewell, brother ; I bequeath her to you."

He grasped my hand ; he was pensive, and appeared hardly to understand me.

"Brother," said he, "in the camp of the whites there is one of your relations, I will give her over to him ; for my part I cannot accept your legacy."

He pointed to a rocky crag which towered high above the adjacent country.

"Do you see that rock ? when the signal of your death shall float from it, it will promptly

be answered by the volley that announces mine. Good-bye."

Without stopping to consider these last words, I embraced him; I pressed a kiss upon the pale face of Marie who was slowly recovering under the attentions of her nurse, and fled precipitately, fearing that another look or word would shake my resolution.

XLIX.

I ran away, I plunged into the depths of the forest, following the tracks that we had left there, and not daring to cast a last glance behind me. To stifle the thoughts which oppressed me, I dashed, without a moment's pause, through thickets and savannas, until I reached the crest of a rock from which I could see the camp of Biassou, with its lines of wagons and huts swarming with life, and looking like an ant-hill of blacks. There, I halted. I felt that I had reached the end of my journey, and my life at the same time. Fatigue and emotion had weakened my powers; I leaned against a tree to save myself from falling, and allowed my eyes to wander over the picture which spread itself before me in the fatal savanna, which was to be my place of execution.

Up to this moment I had imagined that I had tasted the cup of bitterness and gall, but I had not known the most cruel of all misfortunes, that of being constrained by a moral force to voluntarily renounce life when it appeared most sweet. Some hours before I cared not for the world. I did not wish to

live, extreme despair is a simulation of death which makes the reality more earnestly desired. But I had been brought out of this despair. Marie had been restored to me ; my past had become my future, and all my overshadowed hopes had beamed forth more gloriously than ever, and again had a new life, a life of youth, and love, and enchantment, showed gloriously upon the horizon. I was ready to enter upon this life ; everything invited me to it ; no material obstacle, no visible hindrance ; I was free, I was happy, and yet I must die. I had made but one step into paradise, and a hidden duty compelled me to retrace it. Death has but few terrors for the crushed and broken spirit, but how keen and icy is his hand when it grasps the heart which has just begun to live and revel in the joys of life. I have tried it. I had emerged from the tomb ; I had for a moment enjoyed the greatest delights of life, love, friendship, and liberty, and now the door of the sepulchre was again opened, it was necessary to enter the tomb again !

L.

When the first bitter pang of grief had passed, a kind of fury took possession of me ; I entered the valley with a rapid step, I felt the necessity of shortening the suspense. I presented myself at the negro outpost. They appeared surprised and refused to permit me to pass. Strange ! I was nearly obliged to entreat them. At last two of them seized me and led me before Biassou.

I entered the grotto of this chief. He was engaged in examining the springs of various instruments of torture with which he was surrounded. At the noise my guard made in introducing me he turned his head ; my presence did not seem to surprise him.

“ Do you see these ? ” asked he, displaying the horrible engines which lay before him.

I remained calm ; I knew the cruel nature of this *hero of humanity*, and I was determined to endure to the end without flinching.

“ Léogri was lucky in being only hung, was he not ? ” asked he, with his sardonic sneer.

I gazed upon him with cold disdain, and did not reply.

"Notify his reverence the chaplain," said he to an aide-de-camp.

We both remained silent a moment, looking at each other. I observed him; he watched me.

Just then Rigaud entered; he seemed agitated, and whispered a few words to the general.

"Summon the chiefs of my army," said Biassou, calmly.

A quarter of an hour afterwards, the different chiefs in their strange equipments, were assembled in the grotto. Biassou rose.

"Listen, *amigos*, the whites plan to attack us here at daybreak. Our position is a bad one; we must quit it. We will march at sunset and gain the Spanish frontier. Macaya, you and your negroes will form the advance guard. Padrejan, spike the guns which were taken at Pralato: they cannot be taken into the mountains. The brave men of Croix-des-Bouquets will follow Macaya. Toussaint will come next with the blacks from Léogane and Trou. If the *griots* or the *griotes* make any disturbance, I will hand them over to the executioner of the army. Lieutenant-Colonel Cloud will distribute the English muskets that were disembarked at Cape Cabron, and will lead the formerly free half-breeds through the

by-way of La Vista. Slaughter any prisoner that may remain. Destroy the ammunition, and poison the arrows. Throw three tons of arsenic into the wells, from where they get the water for the camp; the colonists will take it for sugar, and drink without distrust. The troops from Limbé, Dondon and Acul, will march after Cloud and Toussaint. Block up the roads to the savanna with rocks, fill the roads with sharpshooters; and set fire to the forest. Rigaud, you will remain with us; Candi, summon my guard about me. The negroes of Morne-Rouge will form the rear-guard, and will not evacuate the savanna until sunrise."

He leaned over to Rigaud, and whispered:

"They are Bug-Jargal's negroes; if they are killed, '*Muerta la tropa, muerte el gefe!*' (Dead the band, the chief will die.) Go, *hermanos*," he added, rising. "Candi will bring you the instructions."

The chiefs retired.

"General," remarked Rigaud, "we ought to send that dispatch of Jean-François', our affairs are going badly; it would stop the advance of the whites."

Biassou drew it hastily from his pocket.

"I agree with you, but there are so many faults of grammar, as they say, that they would laugh." He presented the papers to

me. "Listen, will you save your life? My kindness gives you still another chance. Help me to correct this letter; I will dictate to you my idea: you write it in the *style of the whites*."

I shook my head. He seemed impatient.

"Do you mean no?" asked he.

"No," I replied.

He persisted.

"Reflect well."

And his look seemed to attract mine to the instrument of torture with which he played.

"It is because I have reflected that I refuse," replied I. "You are alarmed for the safety of yourself and your men; you count upon this letter to the Assembly to delay the march and the vengeance of the whites. I do not desire to retain a life which may perhaps have saved yours. Let my execution commence."

"Ha! ha! *muchacho!* (boy)," exclaimed Biassou, touching the instruments of torture with his foot, "it seems to me that you are growing familiar with these! I am sorry, but I have not the time to try them on you. Our position is dangerous; we must get out of it quickly. Ah! so you refuse to act as my secretary? Well, you are right, for I would not have allowed you to live. I have promised you to his reverence the chaplain. I would not permit any one to live who holds Biassou's secrets!"

He turned to the Obi, who just then entered.

"Good father, is your guard ready?"

The latter made a sign in the affirmative.

"Have you taken it from amongst the negroes of Morne-Rouge? They are the only ones who are not occupied in preparations for departure."

The Obi answered by a second sign.

Then Biassou pointed out to me the black flag which I had before remarked in a corner of the grotto.

"That will show your friends when the time comes to give your epaulette to your lieutenant. You see I ought to be moving already. By the way, you have come from your walk, how do you like the neighborhood?"

"I noticed that there were enough trees upon which to hang you and all your band," I replied coldly.

"Ah," retorted he, with his hideous laugh, "there is one place that you have not seen, but with which the *bon per* will make you acquainted. Adieu, young captain, good-night to Léogri."

He saluted me with a chuckle that reminded me of the hiss of the rattlesnake, made a gesture, and turned his back to me, and the negroes dragged me away. The veiled Obi followed us, his rosary in hand.

LI.

I walked between my guards without offering any resistance. It is true that it would have been useless. We ascended the brow of a hill situated to the west of the savanna where we rested a moment. I cast a last lingering look at the setting sun which would never rise again for me. My guards mounted, I followed them. We descended into a little valley, which, under any other circumstances would have enchanted me. A stream ran through it and communicated to the soil a fruitful humidity; this stream fell at the end of the dale into one of those blue lakes which abound in the hills of Santo Domingo. How often, in happier days I have sat and dreamed on the borders of these beautiful lakes in the twilight hour, when their deep azure changed into a sheet of silver, or when the reflections of the first stars sowed the surface with golden spangles! This hour passes as quickly as it comes, but it must pass! How lovely this valley appeared to me! There are the plane-trees and maples of gigantic growth; closely grown thickets of *mauritias*,

a kind of palm, which allows no other vegetation to flourish beneath its shade, date-trees, magnolias with their large calyx, the tall catalpa, showing their polished and exquisitely chiseled leaves, among the golden buds of the ebony-trees. The Canadian *odier* (maple), mingled its yellow flowers with the blue aureolas of that species of the wild honeysuckle which the negroes call *coali*. Thick curtains of luxurious creepers concealed the bare sides of the neighboring rocks. There arose from the virgin soil a soft perfume, such as the first man may have inhaled among the first roses of Eden. We continued our way along the footpath traced on the brink of the torrent. I was surprised to notice that this path closed abruptly at the foot of a tall peak, below which I noticed a natural archway, from which flowed a rapid torrent. A dull roar, and an impetuous wind issued from this natural arch. The negroes took a path to the left which led into a cavern which seemed to be the bed of a torrent that had long been dried up. A vault presented itself, half shut up by brambles, holly, and wild thorns, which crossed it. A noise like that in the arch in the valley was heard under this vault. The blacks dragged me there. As I took the first step into the cavern, the Obi came to my side, and whispered in a strange voice, "This is

what I have to predict now ; only one of us two shall go out of this vault and pass again by this road." I disdained to make any reply. We advanced farther into the gloom. The noise became louder ; we could not hear footsteps. I fancied that this noise was produced by a waterfall ; I was not deceived.

After moving through the darkness ten minutes, we found ourselves on a kind of internal platform formed by nature in the centre of the mountain. The larger portion of this semicircular platform was inundated by a torrent which burst from the interior of the mountain with a terrible din. Above this subterranean hall the roof rose into the shape of a dome, covered with moss of a yellowish hue. This vault was traversed by a large opening through which the daylight penetrated, and the sides of the crevasse were fringed with green trees, gilded just now by rays of the sun. At the northern extremity of the platform the torrent fell with a frightful noise into a deep abyss, over which appeared to float, without being able to illuminate its depths, a feeble portion of the light which came through the aperture in the roof. Over this precipice hung an old tree whose topmost branches were filled with the foam of the waterfall, and whose knotty roots pierced the rock one or two feet below the brink.

This tree, whose top and roots were both swept by the torrent, and hung over the abyss like a skeleton arm, was destitute of foliage, so that I could not distinguish its species. It had a strange and weird appearance; the humidity which saturated its roots prevented it from dying, whilst the force of the cataract tore off its new branches and left only the old.

LII.

The negroes stopped at this terrible spot, and I knew that I was going to die.

It was in this abyss, then, that was to be sunk all my hopes in this world. The image of the happiness which but a few hours before I had voluntarily renounced, brought to my heart a feeling of regret, almost one of remorse. All prayers were unworthy of me ; an expression of regret escaped me however.

"Friends," said I to the negroes who surrounded me, "do you know that it is a sad thing to die at twenty years of age, when one is full of life and strength, when one is loved by one whom in your turn you adore, and you leave behind you eyes that will weep until they are closed forever."

A horrible burst of laughter hailed my expression of regret. It came from the little Obi. This species of evil spirit, this impenetrable being, approached me roughly.

"Ha, ha, ha ! you regret life then, *Labado sea Dios !* My only fear was that death would have no terrors for you !"

It was the same voice, the same laugh that had so often before baffled my conjectures.

"Wretch!" exclaimed I, "who are you then?"

"You are going to learn," replied he, with a terrible accent. Then, thrusting aside the silver sun that concealed his brown chest: "Look!"

I leaned toward him. Two names were written in whitish letters on the hairy chest of the Obi, showing but too clearly the hideous and ineffaceable brand of the heated iron put on the chests of slaves. One of these names was *Effingham*, the other was that of my uncle and myself, *d'Auverney*! I was struck dumb with surprise.

"Well, Leopold d'Auverney," asked the Obi, "does not your name tell you mine?"

"No," answered I, astonished to hear the man name me, and seeking to recall him to my mind. "These two names were only to be found thus united upon the chest of a fool. But he is dead, the poor dwarf, and besides, he was devotedly attached to us. You cannot be Habibrah!"

"The same!" shrieked he, and casting aside the blood-stained *gorras* (cap), he undid his veil. The deformed face of the household dwarf was before my eyes; but a threatening and sinister expression had usurped the

half-imbecile smile which was formerly eternally imprinted on his features.

"Great God!" exclaimed I, overwhelmed with surprise, "do all the dead, then, come back to life! It is Habibrah, my uncle's fool!"

The dwarf put his hand on his dagger and said hoarsely:

"His fool,—and his murderer."

I recoiled in horror.

"His murderer! Villain—was it thus that you repaid his kindness?" He interrupted me.

"His kindness! say his outrages."

"What!" I again cried, "was it you, villain, who struck the fatal blow!"

"It was," he replied, with a terrible expression. "I plunged my knife so deeply into his heart that he had hardly time to cast aside sleep before death claimed him. He cried out feebly, 'Come to me, Habibrah!' *I was with him.*"

The cold-blooded manner in which he narrated the murder disgusted me.

"Wretch! cowardly assassin! You forgot, then, all his kindness, that you ate near his table, and slept at the foot of his bed . . ."

"Like a dog," interrupted Habibrah, roughly, "*como un perro!* Come! I remembered too much of what you call his kindness, but which I looked upon as insults. I took vengeance upon him, and I am going to take

vengeance on you. Listen. Do you think that because I am a mulatto, a deformed dwarf, that I am not a man? Ah, I have a soul stronger, deeper, and bolder than the one that I am about to set free from your girlish frame! I was given to your uncle as if I had been a pet monkey. I served his pleasures, I amused him, whilst he despised me. He loved me, do you say; I had a place in his heart; yes, between his ape and his parrot. I found a better place there with my dagger!"

I shuddered.

"Yes," continued the dwarf, "it was I, it is I! Look me in the face, Leopold d'Auverney! You have often laughed at me, now you shall tremble. Ah, you recall the honest predilection of your uncle for him whom he called his fool! What predilection, *Bon Giu!* If I entered the room a thousand shouts of contemptuous laughter greeted me, my appearance, my deformities, my features, my ridiculous costume—all the deplorable infirmities of my nature, furnished food for laughter to your accursed uncle and his accursed friends. I could not remain silent, it was necessary, *O rabia!* It was necessary for me to join in the laughter which I provoked! I foam with rage whilst I think of it. Answer me: do you think that after such humiliations I could feel anything but the

deadliest hatred for the creature that inflicted them upon me? Do you not think that they were a thousand times harder to endure than the toil in the burning sun, the fetters, and the whip of the driver, which were the lot of the other slaves? Do you not think that they would cause ardent, implacable, and eternal hatred to spring up in the heart of man as lasting as the accursed brand which degrades my chest? Oh! after having suffered so long, that my vengeance should be so short! Why could I not make my tyrant suffer all the torments which I have endured for so many years? Why could he not before his death know the bitterness of wounded pride, and feel what burning traces tears of shame leave upon a face condemned to wear a perpetual smile? Alas! it is too hard to have waited so long for the hour of vengeance, and then only to find it in a dagger-thrust! Had he but only known the hand that struck him it would have been something! but I was too eager to hear his dying groan; I drove in the knife too quickly; he died without having recognized me, and my eagerness balked my vengeance! This time at least, it should be more complete. You see me, do you not? you may be unable to recognize me in my character. You have always been in the habit

of seeing me laughing and joyous, but now nothing prevents me from letting my true nature appear in my eyes, I do not resemble my former self. You only knew my mask; look upon my real face!"

It was horrible.

"Monster!" exclaimed I, "you deceive yourself; there is still something of buffoonery in the atrocity of your face and heart."

"Do not speak of atrocity!" retorted Habibrah, "think of your uncle"

"Wretch," returned I indignantly, "if he was cruel it was at your instigation. You, to pretend to pity the position of the poor slaves—why, then, did you not exert all your influence to make their master treat them less harshly? Why did you never intercede in their favor?"

"I would not have done so for the world, I hinder a white man from blackening his soul by an act of cruelty? No! no! I urged him to inflict more and more punishment upon his slaves, so as to hurry on the revolt, so that the excessive oppression would at last bring vengeance. In seeming to injure my brethren I was serving them."

I was confounded at such a cunning act of diplomacy.

"Well," continued the dwarf, "do you believe now that I knew how to conceive and

to execute? What do you still think of Habibrah the buffoon? What do you think of your uncle's fool?"

"Finish what you have begun so well," replied I. "Let me die, but do not delay!"

He commenced to walk up and down the platform, rubbing his hands.

"And suppose I wish for delay? Suppose that it does my heart good to watch you in the agonies of suspense? You see Biassou owed me my share in the last plunder. When I saw you in the camp of the negroes, I asked for your life. He granted it willingly, and now you are mine; I am amusing myself with you. Soon you will follow the stream of the cataract into the abyss; be calm; but before doing so let me tell you that I have discovered the spot where your wife is concealed, and it was I that advised Biassou to set the forest on fire; and the work, I imagine, is already begun. Thus your family will be swept from the face of the earth. Your uncle perished by steel, you will perish by water, and your Marie by fire!"

"Villain! villain!" I exclaimed, and I made an effort to throw myself on him.

He turned to the negroes.

"Come, bind him!" cried he; "he precipitates his hour."

Then in silence the negroes commenced to bind me with the cords that they had carried with them. Suddenly I fancied that I heard the distant barking of a dog, but this sound might be only an illusion caused by the noise of the cascade. The negroes had finished binding me, and placed me on the brink of the abyss which was to devour me. The dwarf folding his arms, gazed at me with a sinister expression of joy. I lifted my eyes to the opening in the roof so as to avoid the triumphant expression of malice painted on his countenance, and to take one last look at the blue sky. At that instant the barking was stronger, more distinctly heard. The enormous head of Rask appeared at the opening. I trembled. The dwarf exclaimed: "Hurry!" The negroes, who had not heard the barking, prepared to throw me into the abyss.

LIII.

“Comrades!” cried a voice of thunder.

All turned; it was Bug-Jargal. Standing on the edge of the opening; a crimson plume floating on his head.

“Comrades,” repeated he, “stop!”

The negroes prostrated themselves. He continued:

“I am Bug-Jargal.”

The negroes struck the earth with their heads, uttering cries the meaning of which was difficult to understand.

“Unbind the prisoner,” commanded the chief.

Then the dwarf appeared to recover from the stupor into which the sudden appearance of Bug-Jargal had thrown him. He seized the arms of the negroes who were preparing to cut my cords. “How, what is the meaning of this?” cried he. *Que quiere decir eso?*

Then, raising his head toward Bug-Jargal:

“Chief of the Morne-Rouge, what are you doing here?”

Bug-Jargal replied:

“I have come to command my brothers!”

"Yes," answered the dwarf, with concentrated passion, "these are the negroes of Morne-Rouge! But by what right," added he, raising his voice, "do you interfere with my prisoner?"

The chief answered :

"I am Bug-Jargal!"

The negroes struck the ground with their foreheads.

"Bug-Jargal," continued Habibrah, "cannot contravene the orders of Biassou. This white man was given to me by Biassou. I desire his death, and die he shall. *Vosotros*," said he to the negroes, "obey! Throw him into the abyss."

At the voice of the all-powerful Obi, the negroes rose to their feet and took a step towards me. I thought all was lost.

"Unbind the prisoner!" cried Bug-Jargal.

In an instant I was free. My surprise equaled the fury of the Obi. He attempted to throw himself upon me. The negroes interfered. Then he burst out into imprecations and threats.

"*Demonios! rabia! inferno de mi alma!* (wretches! you refuse to obey me!) Do you not recognize *mi voz?* Why did I lose *el tiempo* listening to *este maldicho?* I ought to have him hurled without delay to the fishes of *del baratro*. By wishing to make my vengeance more complete I have

lost it. *O rabia de Satan! Escuchate, vosotros!* if you do not obey me, if you do not hurl this miserable white into the abyss, I will curse you, your hair shall grow white; the mosquitoes and sandflies shall eat you up alive; your legs and your arms shall bend like reeds, your breath shall burn your throat like red-hot sand; you shall die soon, and after your death your spirits shall be compelled to turn a millstone as big as a mountain, in the moon where it is always cold."

The scene produced on me a singular effect. The only one of my color, in a damp and gloomy cavern surrounded by negroes with the aspect of demons, balanced as it were upon the edge of a bottomless gulf, and every now and then threatened by a deformed dwarf, by a hideous sorcerer upon whose striped garments and pointed cap the fading light shone faintly, yet protected by a tall negro who was standing at the only point from which daylight could be seen, it appeared to me that I was at the gates of hell, awaiting the conflict between my good and evil angels, to result in the salvation or the destruction of my soul, as though assisting at a conflict between the good and evil spirits.

The negroes appeared to be terrified at the threats of the Obi. He endeavored to profit by their indecision, and cried:

"Obey me, I desire the death of the white man, he shall die."

Bug-Jargal replied solemnly:

"He shall live! I am Bug-Jargal. My father was the King of Kakongo, who dispensed justice at the gate of his palace."

Again the negroes cast themselves upon the ground.

The chief continued:

"Brethren! go and tell Biassou not to unfurl upon the mountain-top the black banner which should announce to the whites the signal of this man's death, for he was the saviour of Bug-Jargal's life, and Bug-Jargal wills that he should live!"

They rose. Bug-Jargal threw his red plume on the ground before them. The chief of the guard crossed his arms on his breast, and picked it up with every show of respect; then they left the cavern without a word. The Obi followed them down the subterranean avenue.

I will not attempt to describe to you, gentlemen, the situation in which I found myself. I fixed my eyes, wet with tears, upon Pierrot, who gazed upon me with a singular expression of love and tenderness.

"God be praised," said he, "you are saved. Brother, return the way you came. You will meet me again in the valley."

He waved his hand to me and disappeared.

LIV.

Eager to arrive at the appointed meeting-place, and to learn by what fortunate means my saviour had been enabled to make his appearance at so opportune a moment, I prepared to leave this frightful cavern. However, new dangers were reserved for me. The instant I prepared to enter the subterranean passage an unexpected obstacle presented itself in my path. It was Habibrah ! The revengeful Obi had not in reality followed the negroes as I had believed ; he had concealed himself behind a rocky projection of the cave, waiting for a propitious moment for his vengeance. This moment had come. The dwarf laughed bitterly as he showed himself. I was alone, disarmed ; a dagger, the same that he was in the habit of using for a crucifix, shone in his right hand. At the sight of it I recoiled involuntarily.

“ Ha, ha, *maldicho!* (accursed one!) did you think to escape me then ? But the fool is not less of a fool than you ! I have you, and this time there shall be no delay. Your friend Bug-Jargal shall not wait for you long.

You shall soon be at the meeting-place in the valley, but it will be the wave of the cataract that shall bear you there."

As he spoke he dashed at me with uplifted weapon.

"Monster," cried I, retreating to the platform, "just now you were nothing but an executioner, now you are a murderer!"

"I am an avenger," returned he, grinding his teeth.

At this instant I was on the edge of the precipice; he endeavored to hurl me over with a blow of his dagger. I avoided it. His foot slipped on the treacherous moss which covered the rocks; he rolled into the slope polished and rounded by the constant flow of water. "A thousand devils!" he roared. He had fallen into the abyss.

I have already mentioned that the roots of the old tree projected through the crevices of the rocks, a little below the edge of the precipice. In his fall the dwarf struck against these, his striped petticoat caught in them, he grasped at them as a last hope of safety, and clung to them with extraordinary energy. His pointed bonnet fell from his head; to maintain his position he had to let go his dagger, and the dagger of the assassin and the bonnet of the fool disappeared together in the depths of the abyss.

Habibrah, suspended over the terrible gulf, strove vainly to regain the platform, but his short arms could not reach the rocky edge, and he broke his nails in useless efforts to obtain a hold on the muddy surface of the rocks which sloped down into the terrible abyss. He howled with rage.

The slightest push on my part would have been sufficient to hurl him to destruction; but it would have been an act of cowardice, and I did not think of it for a moment. This moderation surprised him. Thanking Heaven for the mercies it had sent me, I determined to abandon him to his fate, and was about to leave the subterranean chamber when suddenly I heard the dwarf, in a voice broken with fear, and which appeared to come from the depths of the abyss.

“Master,” cried he, “master, do not go, for pity’s sake! in the name of the *bon Giu* do not leave me to die guilty and penitent, a human creature, that it is in your power to save. Alas! my strength is failing me; the roots bend, and slip through my fingers, the weight of my body drags me down—I must let go, or my arms will break! Alas, master, the fearful gulf boils beneath me! *Nombre santo de Dios!* Have you no pity for the poor fool? He has been very guilty, but prove that the white men are better than

the mulattoes, the masters better than the slaves."

I approached the brink of the precipice, and the feeble light that broke through the aperture in the roof showed me, on the repulsive features of the dwarf, an expression which I had never seen there before, that of prayer and supplication.

"*Señor Leopold,*" continued he, encouraged by the movement of pity I showed, "can you see a fellow-creature in so terrible a position of peril, without stretching out a hand to save him? Alas! give me your hand, master, with very slight aid you can save me. That which is everything for me is very little to you. I only ask for a little help. Help me then, and my gratitude shall erase my crimes."

I interrupted him.

"Unhappy wretch, do not recall them to my memory!"

"It is because I repent of them that I do so, master! Oh," continued he, "be more generous than I. O heavens, my hand relaxes! I fall! *Ay desdichado!* A hand! your hand! in the name of the mother who bore you, give me your hand!"

I cannot describe the tone of agony in which he pleaded for help. I forgot all; it was no longer an enemy, a traitor, an assassin, it was but an unhappy fellow-creature, whom

a slight exertion upon my part could rescue from a frightful death. He implored me so pitifully. Words and reproaches would have been fruitless, and ridiculous; the necessity for help was urgent. I stooped, knelt down on the bank of the precipice, and with one hand grasping the trunk of the tree I extended him the other on which Habibrah clung. As soon as it was within his reach, he grasped it with both his hands, and hung on to it with all his strength. Far from attempting to aid me in my efforts to draw him up, I felt that he was exerting all his powers to draw me down with him into the abyss. If it had not been for the assistance afforded to me by the trunk of the tree, I must infallibly have been dragged over by the violent and unexpected jerk that the wretched man gave me.

“Villain!” cried I, “what are you doing?”

“Avenging myself!” answered he, with a peal of devilish laughter. “Aha! fool! have I got you in my clutches once more? You have placed yourself again in my power, and I hold you tight. You were saved, I was lost; and yet you of your own accord place your head between the jaws of the alligator, because it sighed after having roared. You will console me, since my death is vengeance. You are caught in the trap, *amigo*! and I shall

take a companion with me to feed the fishes of the lake."

"Ah, traitor!" cried I, struggling with all my strength. "Is it thus that you serve me when I was trying to save you from peril?"

"Yes," replied he. "I know that we could have saved ourselves together, but I would rather that you should perish with me. I prefer your death rather than my life. Come down!"

At this moment, his brown muscular hands grasped mine with unexpected strength; his eyes blazed; his mouth foamed; his strength, the loss of which he had before so piteously bewailed, had returned to him, increased a thousandfold by the hope of revenge: his feet were planted like two perpendicular levers on a ledge of rocks, and he struggled like a tiger against the root which, entangled in his clothes, supported him in spite of himself; for he was endeavoring with all his might to shake himself free, so as to bring all his weight to bear on me, and to drag me more quickly. He stopped several times in his rage to bite me, whilst his hideous features were rendered more terrible by their expression of satanic frenzy. One might say the demon of the cave was seeking to drag down a victim to his abode of gloom and darkness.

One of my knees was fortunately planted in a groove of the rock; my arm was wrapped round a tree which held me; and I strove against the efforts of the dwarf with all the strength that the feeling of self-preservation could give me at such a moment. Every now and then I drew a long breath, and shouted with all my strength "Bug-Jargal!" But the roar of the cascade, and the distance that he must be off, gave me but faint hopes of my voice reaching him.

Meanwhile, the dwarf, who had not anticipated so vigorous a resistance on my part, redoubled his efforts. I began to grow weak, though in reality the struggle had not taken so long as the narration of it. A violent pain paralyzed my arm; my sight grew dim, bright sparks flashed before my eyes, a buzzing sound filled my ears, I heard the creaking of the root as it bent, the laugh of the monster, and it seemed to me that the abyss rose, eager to engulf me.

Before abandoning all hope I made a last effort; collecting my exhausted forces, I once again shouted: "Bug-Jargal." A loud bark replied to me. I recognized Rask. I glanced upwards—Bug-Jargal and his dog were at the edge of the crevice. I do not know whether he had heard my voice or whether some apprehension had made him turn. He saw my danger.

“Hold on!” cried he.

Habibrah, fearing that I might yet be saved, foamed with rage, and cried:

“Come down! then come down!” and renewed the attack with almost supernatural vigor.

At this moment, my weakened arm lost its hold of the tree. All seemed over with me, when I felt myself seized from behind. It was Rask! At a sign from his master he had leaped down on the platform, and seized me by the skirts of my uniform with his powerful teeth. This unlooked-for aid saved me. Habibrah had exhausted all his strength in a last convulsive effort; I put forth all mine to withdraw my hand. His cramped and swollen fingers at last let go of me. The root, so long bent, broke under his weight; and, whilst Rask gave me a violent pull from behind, the wretched dwarf disappeared in the foam of the cascade, hurling a curse at me which was swallowed up with him in the whirl of waters.

Such was the terrible end of my uncle's fool.

LV.

This frightful scene, the furious struggle, his terrible end, exhausted me. I was almost without sense or power of motion. The voice of Bug-Jargal restored me to myself.

“Brother!” cried he, “hasten to leave here! In half an hour the sun will have set. I will meet you in the valley. Follow Rask.”

The words of my friend restored hope, strength, and courage. I rose to my feet. The great dog ran rapidly down the subterranean passage; I followed him; his bark guiding me through the darkness. After a time I saw a streak of light, and in a few minutes I gained the entrance, and breathed more freely. As I left the damp and gloomy vault behind me, I recalled to my mind the prediction of the dwarf, and its fatal fulfillment.

“One only of us shall return by this road.”

His attempt had failed, but the prophecy had been realized.

LVI.

Down in the valley I again saw Bug-Jargal ; I threw myself into his arms, but I had so many questions to put to him that I could not find words in which to express them.

“Listen,” said he. “Your wife, my sister, is safe, I have left her in a camp of the white men, with a relative of yours who was in command of the outposts ; I wish to again constitute myself a prisoner, lest they should execute the ten prisoners whose lives were security for my reappearance. Your relative told me to return, and, if possible, to prevent your execution, that the ten negroes should not be executed until Biassou should announce the fact by displaying a black flag on one of the highest peaks of the mountains. Then I returned to do my best. Rask led me to where you were and I arrived in time—thanks be to Heaven. You will live, and so shall I.”

He extended his hand to me, adding—

“Brother, are you satisfied?”

I again clasped him in my arms ; I entreated him not to leave me again, but to remain with

the white troops ; I promised him a commission in the colonial army. But he interrupted me with an angry air.

“ Brother,” asked he, “ do I propose to you to join my army ? ”

I remained silent ; I felt that I had been in the wrong. He added with gayety—

“ Come, let us hurry to the camp to reassure your wife.”

This proposal was what I most ardently desired ; I was overcome with joy ; we started. The negro knew the way ; he took the lead ; Rask followed us.

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Here d'Auverney stopped suddenly, and cast a gloomy look around him. Perspiration in large beads covered his forehead. He covered his face with his hands. Rask looked at him with an air of uneasiness.

“ Yes, it is thus that you look at me ! ” murmured he.

An instant afterwards he arose, violently agitated, and left the tent. The sergeant and the dog accompanied him.

LVII.

“I will wager,” said Henri, “that we are nearing the end of the tragedy ! I should really feel sorry if anything happened to Bug-Jargal ; what a famous fellow !”

Paschal removed from his lips the mouth of his wicker-covered flask, and said :

“I would have given a dozen hampers of port to have seen the cocoanut which he emptied at a draught.”

Alfred, who was gently humming the air of a love-song, interrupted himself and asked Lieutenant Henri to fasten his aguilettes ; then he added :

“The negro interests me very much. Only I have not yet dared to ask d’Auverney if he knew the air of *la Hermosa Padilla*.” (“Beautiful Padilla.”)

“Biassou is still more remarkable,” continued Paschal, “his tar-water may not be very fine, but at least the fellow knows what it is to be a Frenchman. If I had been his prisoner I would have pawned my moustache with him for a few piastres, as the Portuguese captain did with the town of Goa. I

declare that my creditors are more pitiless than Biassou."

"By the way, captain, here are four louis that I owe you," cried Henri, throwing his purse to Paschal.

The captain looked in astonishment at his generous debtor, who, with more justice, could have called himself creditor. Henri hastily continued :

"Look, gentlemen, what do you think of the story the captain told?"

"Honestly," said Alfred, "I have not listened very attentively, but I certainly had expected something more interesting from d'Auverney's lips. And then it was a romance in prose, and I do not like romances in prose; what air do you sing it to? In fact, the story of Bug-Jargal has bored me a little. It is too long."

"You are right," returned Paschal, the aide-de-camp. "If I had not had my pipe and my bottle, I should have passed a dreary evening. Besides, there were a lot of absurdities in it. How can we believe for instance, that that little thief of a sorcerer, I have forgotten his name . . . *Habit-bas!* do you think he would have drowned himself for the sake of destroying his enemy?"

Henri interrupted him smiling :

“In water especially ! is it not so, Captain Paschal ? What struck me more than anything was, that every time d’Auverney mentioned the name of Bug-Jargal his lame dog lifted up his head.”

“As for that,” interrupted Paschal, “he did precisely the contrary to what I have seen the good old women of Celadas do when the priest pronounced the name of Jesus ; I entered the church with a dozen cuirassiers”

The sound of the sentry presenting arms warned them of d’Auverney’s return. All remained silent. He walked up and down for a few moments with folded arms and in silence. Old Thaddeus, who was seated in a corner, pretended to be caressing Rask, so that the captain would not perceive his uneasiness.

At last d’Auverney continued :

LVIII.

Rask followed us. The highest rock in the valley was yet lighted by the rays of the sun ; a glimmer of light removed it for only an instant, and died away. The negro trembled ; he grasped my hand firmly.

“Listen,” said he.

A dull sound, like the discharge of a piece of artillery was heard, and was repeated by the echoes of the valleys.

“It is the signal!” said the negro in a gloomy voice. He continued : “It is a cannon shot, is it not?”

I nodded as a sign of the affirmative.

In two bounds he sprang to the top of a lofty rock ; I followed him. He crossed his arms and smiled sadly.

“Do you see that?” asked he.

I looked in the direction to which he pointed, and I saw the peak to which he had drawn my attention during my last interview with Marie, the one which the sun still shone upon, surmounted by a huge black flag.

Here d’Auverney again paused.

I learned afterwards that Biassou, in a hurry to leave, and thinking me dead, had ordered the flag to be hoisted before the return of the negroes who had been dispatched to execute me.

Bug-Jargal was still in the same position,—his arms folded, and contemplating the fatal flag. Suddenly he started, took a few steps as though to descend from the rock.

“God ! God ! my unfortunate comrades !”

He returned to me. “Did you hear the cannon ?” he demanded. I made no reply.

“Ah, well ! brother, it was the signal. They are leading them now to the place of execution.”

His head fell upon his breast. He came closer to me.

“Go, return to your wife, brother ; Rask will guide you to her.”

He whistled an African air, the dog wagged his tail, and seemed ready to set out toward the valley.

Bug-Jargal grasped my hand, and forced a smile ; but this smile was convulsive.

“Farewell !” he cried, in a loud voice ; and dashed into the thicket which surrounded us.

I was petrified. The little that I understood of the position made me fear the worst.

Rask, on seeing his master disappear, advanced to the edge of the rock, and, raising his head, uttered a plaintive howl. When he

returned, his tail was between his legs ; his eyes moist ; he looked at me with an air of inquietude, then he turned to the spot from which his master had disappeared, and barked several times. I understood him ; I felt the same fears. I took a few steps to his side ; then he dashed off in pursuit of Bug-Jargal ; I should soon have lost sight of him, had he not every now and then halted to give me time to come up to him.

We passed through many a valley ; we climbed wooded hills and thickets. At last . . .

D'Auverney's voice failed him. An expression of despair covered his face ; he could not find words to continue his narrative.

"Thou continue, Thaddeus," said he, "for I have no more strength than an old woman."

The old sergeant was not less distressed than his captain ; but he made an effort to obey him.

"With your permission. Since you wish it, captain, I must tell you, officers, that Bug-Jargal—called Pierrot—was a tall negro, very strong, very gentle, very courageous, and the bravest man in the world—except you, captain ; if you please, I was terribly prejudiced against him, for which I will never pardon myself, though you, captain, have forgiven me. So much so, captain, that when we heard that your execution had been fixed for the evening of the second day, I flew into a furious rage

with the poor fellow, and I felt a fiendish pleasure in informing him that his death would pay for yours, or that, if he escaped, ten of his men would be shot by way of reprisal, as they say, at this news. He said nothing, but an hour afterwards he made his escape through a great hole." D'Auverney made a movement of impatience, Thaddeus continued :

"Well ! When we saw the great black flag hoisted on the mountain—and as the negro had not returned, a fact which surprised none of us, with your permission, our officers ordered the signal gun to be fired, and I was ordered to conduct the ten negroes to the place of execution, called the Devil's Mouth, some distance from the camp—but that does not matter ! When we reached there, you may believe, gentlemen, it was not to set them at liberty, I had them bound, as is the custom, and I paraded my firing party. When who should burst upon us but the tall negro. He was out of breath with the speed that he had made.

" 'I arrived in time !' said he. 'Good-day, Thaddeus.'

"Yes, gentlemen, he only said that, and he hastened to unbind his comrades. I stood there, stupefied. Then, with your permission, captain—captain, there was a good deal of generous argument between the other negroes and himself which might have lasted longer

but—well, it is no good hiding the fact, it was I that stopped it. He took the place of the blacks. At this moment, his great dog—poor Rask! he came and grasped me at the throat. He would have held me longer, captain, but Pierrot made a sign to him, and the poor brute released me; but Bug-Jargal could not prevent him taking his place at his feet. Then, I thought you were dead, captain. I was in a fine rage. I cried”

The sergeant extended his hand, looked at the captain, but could not say the fatal word.

“ Bug-Jargal fell. A bullet broke the dog’s foot. Since that time, gentlemen,” and the sergeant shook his head, sadly, “since then he has been lame. I heard groans in the adjacent wood; I reached it, it was you, captain—a bullet had hit you as you were running forward to save the tall negro. Yes, captain, you were wounded, and Bug-Jargal was dead! You, captain, we carried back to the camp; you were not dangerously wounded, but you recovered owing to the good care of Madam Marie.”

The sergeant stopped. D’Auverney, in a solemn voice, continued:

“ Bug-Jargal was dead!”

Thaddeus bowed his head.

“ Yes,” said he, “he spared my life, and it was I who killed him! . . .”

NOTE

The reader, in general, is seldom satisfied with the conclusion of a narrative unless it enters into every detail in winding up the story. For this reason the minutest researches have been made into the facts having reference to the concluding details of the last scenes of Leopold d'Auverney, his sergeant, and his dog. The reader is already aware that the captain's feelings of melancholy arose partly from the death of Bug-Jargal, called Pierrot, and the loss of his beloved Marie, who was saved from the horrors of Fort Gali-fet, only to perish in the burning of Cap. As for the captain, his fate may be briefly recapitulated.

The day after a great victory had been won by the French Republican forces against the European armies, the general of division, M——, who was in command of the entire force, was seated in his tent, alone, drawing up, from the reports of his staff, the bulletin which was to be sent to the National Convention concerning the victory of the day before. An aide-de-camp announced to him the

arrival of a representative of the people, who demanded an audience. The general loathed these red cap ambassadors, who were sent by La Montagne to humiliate the military officers, charged with the hateful mission of spying upon glory. However, it would have been dangerous for him to have refused to admit him, especially after a victory. The gory idol of these times loved illustrious victims; and the executioners of the Place de la Revolution were delighted if they could at the same time cause a head and a coronet to fall—were it one of thorns, like that of Louis XVI.; of flowers, like those of the girls of Verdun; or of laurels, like those of Custine or of André Chénier. The general gave orders that the representative should be brought in.

After a few clumsy congratulations regarding the recent victory of the Republican armies, the representative came up close to the general, and muttered in a suppressed voice—

“But this is not all, citizen-general; it is not enough to destroy the foreign enemy,—those nearer home must be also crushed.”

“What do you mean, citizen-representative?” asked the astonished general.

“There is in your division,” mysteriously answered the emissary of the Convention, “a captain named Leopold d’Auverney; he is

serving in the 32d brigade. General, do you know him?"

"Know him, certainly I do," replied the general; "I was reading the report of the adjutant-general which refers to him. The 32d brigade had in him an excellent captain."

"What, citizen-general!" interposed the representative, harshly, "were you thinking of promoting him?"

"I will not conceal from you, citizen-representative, that such was my intention."

Here the representative imperiously interrupted the general.

"Victory has blinded you, General M——! Take care what you say or do. If you cherish serpents who are the enemies of the people, take care that the people do not crush you and the serpents! This Leopold d'Auverney is an aristocrat, a hater of the revolution, a royalist, a Girondin! Public justice demands his head. He must be given up to me in an hour."

The general replied coldly:

"I cannot do so."

"*How! you cannot do so?*" shouted the representative, whose rage was redoubled at this opposition. "Are you ignorant, General M——, of the extent of my power? The Republic commands you, and you must listen to me. I will allow you, in consideration of your success, to read the report which has been

handed me in regard to this d'Auverney, and which I shall send with him to the Public Prosecutor. 'LEOPOLD AUVERNEY (formerly known as D'AUVERNEY), captain in the 32d brigade, convicted, *First*, of having, at a meeting of conspirators, narrated an anti-revolutionary tale, conducing to the ridicule of the true principles of Equality and Liberty, and exalting the worn-out superstitions known under the names of *royalty* and *religion*. Convicted, *Secondly*, of having used expressions deservedly forbidden by all good republicans, to describe certain recent events, notably the enfranchisement of the negroes formerly of Santo Domingo. Convicted, *Thirdly*, of having made use of the expression *monsieur* in his narrative instead of *citizen*; and, last, *Fourthly*, having, by said narrative, endeavored to bring into contempt the Republic, to propagate the infamous doctrines of the Girondins and Brissotistes. He deserves death.' Well! general, what do you say to that? Do you still protect this traitor? Do you hesitate to deliver him to meet the well-merited punishment of his crimes?"

"This enemy of his country has given his life for her," answered the general, with dignity. "As a contrast to your report, listen to an extract from mine: 'LEOPOLD D'AUVERNEY, captain in the 32d brigade, has contributed

largely to the success that our arms have obtained. A formidable earthwork had been erected by the allies; it was the key to their position, and it was necessary to carry it. The death of the stormers who led the attack was almost inevitable. Captain d'Auverney volunteered to lead; he carried the earthwork, but was shot down at the moment of victory. Sergeant Thaddeus of the 32d, and a large dog, were found dead within a few paces of him.' It was my intention to propose that the National Convention should pass a vote that Captain Leopold d'Auverney had merited the thanks of his country. You see, citizen-representative," continued the general, calmly, "that our duties differ slightly—we both send each from his side a report to the Convention. The same name appears in each list. You denounce him as a traitor, I hold him up to posterity as a hero; you devote him to ignominy, I to glory; you would erect a scaffold for him, I a monument; each to his taste. Thank God! he is fortunate in having, by death in action, escaped the infamy you proposed for him; he whose death you desired is dead. He has not waited for you."

The representative, furious at seeing his conspiracy disappear with the conspirator, muttered between his teeth:

“He is dead!—more’s the pity!”

The general caught his words, and in indignant tones exclaimed :

“There is still a resource left for you, citizen-representative ! Go seek the body of Captain d’Auverney amongst the ruins of the redoubt. Who knows? The bullets of the enemy may have spared his head for the national guillotine.”

WRITTEN IN 1826.

NOTES

¹Our readers have, without doubt, forgotten that the Massiac Club, of which Lieutenant Henri spoke, was an association of *négrophiles*. This club, formed in Paris at the commencement of the revolution, had provoked, for the most part, the insurrections which broke out in the colonies. One may be astonished at the lightness and boldness with which the lieutenant jeered at *philanthropes* which still reigned at this epoch, by the grace of the executioner. But it must be remembered that before, during and after the "Terror," freedom of thought and speech had taken refuge in the camps. This noble privilege, from time to time, cut off the head of a general; but absolved from all reproach the dazzling glory of these soldiers that the denouncers of the Convention called "the 'Gentlemen' of the Army of the Rhine."

²A precise explanation will perhaps be necessary for this word. Monsieur Moreau de Saint-Méry, in developing the Franklin system, has classed in the generic species the different tints that present the mixture of the colored population. He supposes that the man is formed of one hundred and twenty parts, whites with whites, blacks with blacks. Upon this principle, he divides the nine species, called the *sacatra*, the *griffe*, the *marabout*, the *mulâtre*, the *quarteron*, the *métis*, the *mamelouc*, the *quarteronné*, and the *sang-mêlé*, according to the proportion of the mixture of the blacks and the whites.

³ *Obi*, a sorcerer.

⁴ Our readers doubtless know that this was the first name given to Santo Domingo, by Christopher Columbus, at the time of the discovery, in December, 1492.

⁵ Victor Hugo has not considered it necessary to give the entire Spanish song, *Porque me huyes, Maria?*

⁶ So the Spanish dwarf called his cap.

⁷ White men who followed trades—not property owners.

⁸ This remedy is frequently used by the natives of Africa; notably by the Moors of Tripoli, who use the ashes of a page of the Koran—an English traveler calls it the infusion of the Koran.

⁹ Many half-castes, otherwise white, had this sign, which, although it disappeared with age, always reappeared in their children.

¹⁰ Toussaint-Louverture, who was brought up in the teachings of Biassou, and to whom, if he was not superior in ability, he was at least equal in perfidy and cruelty. Toussaint-Louverture has given at a later date an example of this same power over the fanatical negroes. This chief, born, they say, of a royal African race, had received, like Biassou, some rude instruction, from which he added genius. He was on the Republican throne in Santo Domingo at the same time as Napoleon founded his monarchy in France. Toussaint admired the first Consul, but the first Consul, seeing in Toussaint nothing but a parodist, disdainfully repulsed all attempts at correspondence with this free slave who had the audacity to write to him, beginning as follows: *To the first among the whites, the first among the blacks sends greeting, etc., etc.*

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THE NOVELS
COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED
OF
VICTOR HUGO



J. T. Raffaelli inv.

An Elegiac Poet reading.

—A Comedy Apropos of a Tragedy. Front.

VICTOR HUGO

LAST DAY
OF A CONDEMNED
CLAUDE GUEUX

TRANSLATED BY

EUGENIA DE B.



PHILADELPHIA
GEORGE BARRIE & SON

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PREFACE

At the head of the earlier editions of this work, published at first without the name of the author, there was nothing but the following lines.

“There are two ways of accounting for the existence of this work. Either there really has been found a bundle of yellow, ragged, papers, on which were inscribed, exactly as they came, the last thoughts of a wretched being; or else there has been a man, a dreamer, occupied in observing nature for the advantage of art, a philosopher, a poet, who, having been seized with these forcible ideas, could not rest until he had given them the tangible form of a volume. Of these two explanations, the reader will choose that which he prefers.”

As is seen, at the time when this book was first published, the author did not deem fit to give publicity to the full extent of his thoughts. He preferred waiting to see whether the work would be fully understood. It has been. The author may now, therefore, unmask the political and social ideas, which he wished to render popular under this harmless literary guise. He

avows openly, that *The Last Day of a Condemned* is only a pleading, direct or indirect, as is preferred, for the abolition of the penalty of death. His design herein and what he would wish posterity to see in his work, if its attention should ever be given to so slight a production, is, not to make out the special defense of any particular criminal, such defense being transitory as it is easy; he would plead generally and permanently for all accused persons, present and future; it is the great point of human right, stated and pleaded before society at large, that highest judicial court; it is the sombre and fatal question which breathes obscurely in the depths of each capital offense, under the triple envelopes of pathos in which legal eloquence wraps them; it is the question of life and death, I say, laid bare, denuded and despoiled of the sonorous twistings of the bar, revealed in daylight, and placed where it should be seen, in its true and hideous position, not in the law courts, but on the scaffold, not among the judges, but with the executioner!

This is what he has desired to effect. If futurity should award him the glory of having succeeded, which he dares not hope, he desires no other crown.

He proclaims and repeats it, then, in the name of all accused persons, innocent or guilty, before all courts, all juries, and all judges.

And in order that his pleading should be as universal as his cause, he has been careful, while writing *The Last Day of a Condemned*, to omit anything of a special, individual, contingent, relative, or modifiable nature, as also any episode, anecdote, known event, or real name, keeping to the limit (if "limit" it may be termed!) of pleading the cause of any condemned prisoner whatever, executed at any time, for any offense. Happy if, with no other aid than his thoughts, he has mined sufficiently into the subject to make a heart bleed, under the *œs triplex* of a magistrate! Happy if he could render merciful those who consider themselves just! Happy if, penetrating sufficiently deep within the judge, he has sometimes reached the man.

Three years ago, when this book first appeared, some people thought it was worth while to dispute the authorship! Some asserted that it was an English book, and others that it was an American book. What a singular mania there is for seeking the origin of matters at a great distance; trying to trace from the source of the Nile, the streamlet which washes one's street. Alas! this work is neither English, neither American nor Chinese. The author found the idea of *The Last Day of a Condemned*, not in a book, for he is not accustomed to seek his ideas so far afield, but where

you all might find it, where perhaps you may all have found it, (for who is there that has not reflected and had reveries of *The Last Day of a Condemned*;) there, on the public walk, on the *Place de Grève*.

It was there, while passing casually during an execution, that this forcible idea occurred to him; and, since then, after those funereal Thursdays of the Court of Cassation, which send forth through Paris the intelligence of an approaching execution, the hoarse voices of the spectators going to the *Grève*, as they hurried past his windows, filled his mind with the prolonged misery of the person about to suffer, which he pictured to himself from hour to hour, according to what he conceived was its actual progress. It was a torture which commenced from daybreak and lasted, like that of the miserable being who was tortured at the same moment, until *four o'clock*. Then only, when once the *ponens caput expiravit* was announced by the heavy toll of the clock bell, he breathed again freely, and regained comparative peace of mind. Finally, one day, he thinks it was after the execution of Ulbach, he commenced writing this work; and since then he has felt relieved. When one of those public crimes, called legal executions, are committed, his conscience now acquits him of participation therein.

All this, however, is not sufficient ; it is well to be freed from self-accusation, but it would be still better to endeavor to save human life.

Also, he does not know any aim more elevated, more holy, than that of seeking the abolition of capital punishment ; with sincere devotion he joins the wishes and efforts of those philanthropic men of all nations, who have labored, of late years, to throw down the patibulary tree, the only tree which revolution fails to uproot ! It is with pleasure that he takes his turn, to give his feeble stroke, after the all-powerful blow which, sixty-seven years ago, Beccaria gave to the ancient gibbet which had been standing during so many centuries of Christianity.

We have just said that the scaffold is the only edifice which revolutions do not demolish. It is rare indeed that revolutions are temperate in spilling blood ; and although they are sent to prune, to lop, to reform society, the punishment of death is a branch which they have never removed !

We own, however, if any revolution ever appeared to us capable and worthy of abolishing capital punishment, it was the revolution of July. It seemed, indeed, as if it belonged to the merciful popular rising of modern times, to erase the barbarous enactments of Louis XI., of Richelieu, and of Robespierre, and to

inscribe at the head of the code the inviolability of human life! 1830 was worthy of breaking the axe of '93.

At one time we really hoped for it. In August, 1830, there seemed so much generosity afloat, such a spirit of gentleness and civilization in the multitude, that we almost fancied the punishment of death was abolished, by a tacit and unanimous consent, with the rest of the evils which had oppressed us. For some weeks confiding and credulous, we had faith in the inviolability of life, for the future, as in the inviolability of liberty.

And, indeed, two months had scarcely passed, when an attempt was made to resolve into a legal reality the sublime Utopia of Cæsar Bonesana.

Unfortunately this attempt was awkward, imperfect, almost hypocritical; and made in a different spirit from the general interest.

It was in the month of October, 1830, as may be remembered, some days after France had been startled by the proposition to bury Napoleon under the column, that the question of capital punishment was brought before the Chamber, and discussed with much talent, energy, and apparent feeling. During two days, there was a continued succession of impressive eloquence on this momentous subject.

And what was the subject?—to abolish the punishment of death?

Yes, and No !

Here is the truth :

Four men of the world, four persons well known in society,¹—had attempted, in the higher range of politics, one of those daring strokes which Bacon calls *crimes*, and which Machiavel calls *enterprises*. Well ! crime or enterprise,—the law, brutal for all, would punish it by death ; and the four unfortunates were prisoners, legal captives guarded by three hundred tri-colored cockades, under the fine ogives at Vincennes. What was now to be done? You understand the impossibility of sending to the *Grève*, in a common cart, ignobly bound with coarse ropes, seated back to back with that functionary who must not be named,—four men of our own rank,—“ four men of the world !”

Still, if there had even been a mahogany guillotine !

Well, to settle the matter, they need only abolish the punishment of death !

And thereupon the Chamber set to work !

Notice, gentlemen, that only yesterday they had treated this abolition as Utopian, as a theory, a dream, a poetic folly. This was not the first time that an endeavor had been made to draw their attention to the cart, the coarse

ropes, and the fatal machine. How strange it is, that these hideous details suddenly acquired such sudden force in their minds !

Bah ! they had good reason to be excited, it was not on account of the general good that they sought to abolish capital punishment ; but for their own sakes,—as Deputies, who might become Ministers. And thus an alloy of egotism alters and destroys the fairest social combinations. It is the dark vein in statuary marble, which, crossing everywhere, comes forth at each moment unexpectedly under the chisel !

It is surely unnecessary for us to declare that we were not among those who desired the death of the four ministers. When once they were imprisoned, the indignant anger we had felt at their attempt, changed with us as with every one else, into profound pity. We reflected on the prejudices of education of some among them : on the ill-developed head of their chief, fanatic and obstinate relapse of the conspiracies of 1804, whitened before its time, in the damp cells of state prisons ; on the fatal necessity of their common position ; on the impossibility of their placing a drag on that rapid slope, down which monarchy rushed blindly on the 8th of August, 1829 ; on the influence of personal intercourse with royalty over them, which we had hitherto

underrated ; and finally we reflected, above all, on the dignity which one among them spread, like a purple mantle, over their misfortunes ! We were among those who sincerely wished their lives saved, and would have readily lent our aid to that effect. If a scaffold had been raised for them in Paris, we feel quite certain—and if it be an illusion, we would preserve it—that there would have been an insurrection to pull it down ; and we should have been of the rioters. Here I must add that, in each social crisis, of all scaffolds, the political one is the most abominable, the most fatal, the most mischievous, the most necessary to extirpate.

In revolutionary times, beware of the first head that falls. It excites the sanguinary appetite of the mob.

We therefore agreed thoroughly with those who wished to spare the four ministers, both as a matter of feeling, and of political reasoning. But we should have liked better that the Chamber had chosen another occasion for proposing the abolition of capital punishment.

If they had suggested this desirable change, not with reference to those four ministers, fallen from the Tuileries to Vincennes, but in the instance of the first highwayman—in the case of one of those wretches to whom you

neither give word nor look, and from whom you shrink as they pass. Miserable beings, who, during their ragged infancy, ran barefoot in the mud of the crossings; shivering in winter near the quays, or seeking to warm themselves outside the ventilator from the kitchens of M. Véfour, where you happen to be dining; scratching out, here and there, a crust of bread from the heaps of filth, and wiping it before eating; scraping in the gutter all day, with a rusty nail, in the hopes of finding a farthing; having no other amusement than the gratuitous sight of the king's fête, and the public executions—that other gratuitous sight: poor devils! whom hunger forces to theft, and theft to all the rest; children disinherited by their step-mother the world; who are adopted by the house of correction, in their twelfth year, by the galleys at eighteen, and by the guillotine at forty! Unfortunate beings, whom, by means of a school and a workshop, you might have rendered good, moral, useful; and with whom you now know not what to do; flinging them away like a useless burthen, sometimes into the red antheaps of Toulon, sometimes into the silent cemetery of Clamart; cutting off life after taking away liberty. If it had been in the instance of one of these outcasts that you had proposed to abolish the punishment of death, oh! then your councils

would have indeed been noble, great, holy, majestic ! It has ever belonged to those who are truly great and truly powerful, to protect the lowly and weak. Were the august fathers of Trent assisting the heretics to repent in the name of the entrails of God, *per viscera Dei*, because they hoped for their conversion, *quoniam sancta synodis sperat hærellicorum conversionem*, no assembly of men has ever presented to the world a spectacle more sublime, more illustrious and more merciful. How grand would be a council of Brahmins, advocating the cause of the Pariah ! And with us the cause of the Pariah is the cause of the people. In abolishing the penalty of death, for sake of the people, and without waiting until you were personally interested in the question, you would have done more than a political work, you would have conferred a social benefit.

Instead of this, you have not yet even completed a political act, while seeking to abolish it, not for the abolition's sake, but to save four unfortunate ministers, caught with their hands in the sack of *coups d'état*.

What has happened ? As you were not sincere, the people were distrustful ; when they suspected the cause of your change, they became angry at the question altogether ; and, strange to say, they declared in favor of that

condign punishment, the weight of which presses entirely on themselves.

Immediately after the famous discussion in the Chamber, orders were given to respite, indefinitely, all executions. This was apparently a great step gained; the opponents of punishment by death breathed again; but the illusion was of short duration. The trial of the ministers was ended. I know not what judgment was rendered.

The four lives were spared, and the fortress of Ham was selected as a medium between death and liberty. These different arrangements once completed, all fear was banished from the minds of the ruling statesmen; and along with fear, humanity was also banished. There was no further question of abolishing capital punishment; and, when they no longer wished to prove to the contrary, Utopia became again Utopia, theory was theory, and poetry, poetry.

There were still in the prisons, however, some unfortunate condemned wretches, who, having been allowed during five or six months to walk about the prison-yards and breathe the fresh air, felt tranquil for the future, sure of life, mistaking their reprieve for pardon. But wait.

There had indeed been a reprieve of six months for these hapless captives, whose

sufferings were thus gratuitously aggravated, by making them cling again to life : then, without reason, without necessity, without well knowing why, the respites were all revoked, and all these human beings were launched into eternity.

Let us add, that never were executions accompanied by more atrocious circumstances, than since that revocation of the reprieve of July. Never have the anecdotes of the *Grève* been more revolting, or more effectual to prove the execration of capital punishment.

We will cite here two or three examples of the horrors which have attended recent executions. We must shock the nerves of the wives of king's council. A wife is sometimes a conscience.

In the South, towards the close of last September, the following circumstance occurred : I think it was at Pamiers. Towards the end of September the officers went to a man in prison, whom they found quietly playing at cards, and gave him notice that he was to die in two hours. The wretched creature was horror-struck ; for, during the six months he had been forgotten, he had no longer thought on death ; he was confessed, bound, his hair cut off, he was placed in the fatal cart, and taken to the place of execution : the executioner took him from the priest : laid him down and

bound him on the see-saw, put him *in the oven*, to use slang, and then let loose the axe. The heavy triangle of iron slowly detached itself, falling by jerks down the slides, until, horrible to relate, it gashed the man, but without killing him! The poor creature uttered a frightful cry. The disconcerted executioner hauled up the axe, and let it slide down again. A second time, the neck of the malefactor was cut, without being severed. Again he shrieked, the crowd joining him. The executioner raised the axe a third time, hoping to do better at the third stroke, but, no! The third stroke only started a third stream of blood on the prisoner's neck, but the head did not fall. Let us cut short these fearful details. Five times the axe was raised and let fall, and after the fifth stroke, the condemned was still shrieking for mercy. The indignant populace began in justice to stone the executioner, who hid himself beneath the guillotine, and crept away behind the gendarmes' horses: but we have not yet finished. The hapless culprit seeing he was left alone on the scaffold, raised himself on the plank, and there standing, frightful, streaming with blood, he demanded with feeble cries that some one would unbind him. The populace, full of pity, were on the point of forcing the gendarmes to help the hapless wretch, who had

five times undergone his sentence. At this moment the servant of the executioner, a youth under twenty, mounted on the scaffold, told the sufferer to turn round, that he might unbind him: then, taking advantage of the posture of the dying man, who had yielded himself without any mistrust, sprang on him, and slowly cut through the neck with a knife! All this happened; all this was seen. Yes.

According to law, a judge was obliged to be present at this execution: by a sign he could have stopped all. Why was he leaning back in his carriage then, this man, while they massacred another man? What was he doing, this punisher of assassins, while they thus assassinated, in open daylight, his fellow-creature?

And the judge was not tried for this: nor was the executioner tried for it: and no tribunal inquired into this monstrous violation of all law on one of God's creatures!

In the seventeenth century, that epoch of barbarity in the criminal code, under Richelieu, under Christophe Fouquet, when Monsieur de Chalais was put to death at Nantes, by an awkward soldier, who, instead of a sword-stroke, gave him thirty-four strokes of a cooper's adze,² thus at least it seemed irregular to the parliament of Paris; there was an inquest and a trial; and, although Richelieu and Fouquet were not punished the soldier

was. An injustice doubtless, but in which there was some show of justice.

In the modern instance, nothing was done : the thing took place after July, in times of civilization and march of intellect, a year after the celebrated lamentation of the Chamber on the penalty of death. The circumstance attracted no attention ; the Paris papers published it as an anecdote, and no one cared about it. It was only known that the guillotine had been put out of order by some one who wished to annoy the executioner. A dismissed servant of the executioner, to revenge himself, had taken this method of action.

It was only imagination. Let us continue.

At Dijon, only three months ago, they brought to the scaffold a woman—a woman ! This time again, the axe of the guillotine failed of its effect, and the head was not quite detached. Then the executioner's servants pulled the feet of the woman ; and, amidst the yells of the populace, thus fulfilled the law !

At Paris, we have come back to the time of secret executions ; since July they no longer dare to decapitate in the *Grève* ; as they are afraid, as they are cowardly, here is what they do. They took lately from the Bicêtre prison, a man, under sentence of death, named Désandrieux, I think ; they put him into a

sort of panier on two wheels, closed on every side, bolted and padlocked : then with a gendarme in front, and another at the back, without noise or crowd, they proceeded to the deserted barrier Saint-Jacques. It was eight in the morning when they arrived, with but little light. There was a newly erected guillotine, and, for spectators, some dozens of little boys, grouped on the heaps of stones around the unexpected machine. Quickly they withdrew the man from the basket ; and, without giving him time to breathe, they furtively, secretly, shamefully, deprived him of life ! And that is called a public and solemn act of high justice ! Infamous derision !

How then do the law-givers understand the word civilization ? To what point have we attained ? Justice reduced to stratagems and frauds ! The law reduced to expedient ! Monstrous !

A man condemned to death, it would seem, was greatly to be feared, since they put an end to him in this traitorous fashion !

Let us be just, however ; the execution was not quite secret. In the morning people hawked and sold, as usual, the sentence of death through the streets. It appears, there are people who live by such sales. The crime of a hapless fellow-creature, its punishment, his torture, his agony, forms their stock in

trade: a paper that they sell for a penny. Can one conceive anything more hideous than this coin, verdigrised in blood? Who can it be that picks it up?

Here are enough of facts: here are too many. Is not all this horrible?

What can be alleged in favor of punishment by death?

I put this question seriously. I ask it that it may be answered; I ask it of legislators, and not of literary gossips. I know there are people who take the excellence of punishment by death for a text of paradoxes, like any other theme; there are others who only advocate capital punishment because they hate so-and-so who attack it. It is for them almost a literary question, a question of persons, and proper names; these are the envious, who do not find more fault with good lawyers than with good artists. The Joseph Grippas are no more wanting to the Filangieri, than the Torregiani to the Michael-Angelos, and the Scuderies to the Corneilles.

It is not to these that I address myself; but to men of law properly so called—to logicians, to reasoners; to those who love the penalty of death, for its beauty, its goodness, its grace!

See, let them give their reasons.

Those who judge and condemn, say that punishment by death is necessary, first—

because it is requisite to remove from the social community a member which has already injured it, and might injure it again. If this be all, perpetual imprisonment would suffice. What is the use of inflicting death? You argue that a prisoner may escape from jail—keep watch more strictly! If you do not believe in the solidity of iron bars, how do you venture to have menageries?

Let there be no executioner where the jailer can be sufficient.

But, they answer: "Society must avenge itself, society must punish." Neither one nor the other: vengeance is an individual act, and punishment belongs to God.

Society is between the two; punishment is above its power, retaliation beneath it. Society should not punish, to avenge itself; it should correct, to ameliorate others!

Their third and last reason remains, the theory of example. "We must make examples. By the sight of the fate inflicted on criminals, we must shock those who might otherwise be tempted to imitate them!" Well; in the first place we deny, the power of the example. We deny, that the sight of executions produces the desired effect. Far from edifying the common people, it demoralizes and ruins their feeling, injuring every virtue: proofs of this abound and would encumber

our argument if we chose to cite them. We will allude to only one fact, amongst a thousand, because it is of recent occurrence. It happened only ten days back from the present moment, viz., on the 5th of March, the last day of the Carnival. At St. Pol, immediately after the execution of an incendiary named Louis Camus, a group of masqueraders came and danced round the still reeking scaffold! Make then your fine examples! Mardi-Gras will turn them into jest!

If, notwithstanding all experience, you still hold to the theory of example, then give us back the Sixteenth Century; be in reality formidable: restore to us a variety of suffering; restore us Farinacci; restore us the sworn torturers; restore us the gibbet, the wheel, the block, the rack, the thumb-screw, the live-burial vault, the burning cauldron; restore us in the streets of Paris, as the most open shop among the rest, the hideous stall of the executioner, constantly full of human flesh; give us back Montfaucon, its caves of bones, its beams, its crooks, its chains, its rows of skeletons; give us back, in its permanence and power, that gigantic outhouse of the Paris executioner! This indeed would be wholesale example, this would be punishment by death, well understood; this would be a system of

execution in some proportion—which, while it is horrible, is also terrible!

Or better, do as in England. In England, land of commerce, they capture a smuggler on the coast near Dover, and use him *for an example*—*for an example* they leave him swinging on the gibbet; but as the weather might destroy the corpse, they wrap it carefully in canvas soaked in tar, in order not to have to renew it too often. Oh, land of economy! Tar the hanged ones!

However there is still some logic in that. It is the most human way of using the theory of example.

But do you seriously suppose you are making an example, when you take the life of a poor wretch, in the most deserted part of the exterior boulevards? On the *Grève* in open daylight it might be so, but at the barrier Saint-Jacques, at eight o'clock in the morning—can it be that that is an example? An example for whom? For the trees of the boulevard apparently.

Do not you see then, that your public executions are done in private? That fear is with the execution, and not among the multitude? One is sometimes tempted to believe, that the advocates for capital punishment have not thoroughly considered in what it consists. But place in the scales, against any crime whatever, this exorbitant right, which society arrogates

to itself, of taking away that which it did not bestow : that most irreparable of evils !

The alternatives are these : first, the man you destroy is without family, relations, or friends, in the world. In this case, he has received neither education nor instruction ; no care has been bestowed either on his mind or heart ; then, by what right would you kill this miserable orphan ? You punish him because his infancy trailed on the ground, without stem, or support : you make him pay the penalty of the isolated position in which you left him ! you make a crime of his misfortune ! No one taught him to know what he was doing ; this man lived in ignorance : the fault was in his destiny, not himself. You destroy one who is innocent.

Or, secondly ; the man has a family ; and then do you think the fatal stroke wounds him alone ? that his father, his mother, or his children will not suffer by it ? No, in killing him, you vitally injure all his family. And thus again you punish the innocent.

Blind and ill-directed penalty ; which, on whatever side it turns, strikes the innocent !

Imprison for life this culprit who has a family : in his cell he can still work for those who belong to him. But how can he help them from the depth of the tomb ? And can you reflect without shuddering, on what will

become of those little boys, of those little girls, from whom you take away their father, their support? Do you not feel that in fifteen years the one may be in the galleys, the other in the dancing halls?

In the colonies, when a slave is condemned to public execution, there are a thousand francs of indemnity paid to the proprietor of the man! What, you compensate a master, and you do not indemnify a family? In this country, do you not take the man from those who possess him? Is he not, by a much more sacred tie than master and slave, the property of his father, the wealth of his wife, the fortune of his children?

We have already proved your law guilty of assassination; now we have convicted it of robbery!

And then another consideration. Do you consider the soul of this man? Do you know in what state it is, that you dismiss it so hastily?

This may be called sentimental reasoning, by some disdainful logicians, who draw their arguments only from their minds. I often prefer the reasonings of the heart; and certainly the two should always go together. Reason is on our side, feeling is on our side, and experience is on our side. In those States where punishment by death is abolished,

the mass of capital crime has yearly a progressive decrease. Let this fact have its weight.

I do not advocate, however, a sudden and complete abolition of the penalty of death, such as was so heedlessly attempted in the Chamber of Deputies. On the contrary, I desire every precaution, every experiment, every suggestion of prudence: besides, in addition to this gradual change, I would have the whole penal code examined, and reformed; and time is a great ingredient requisite to make such a work complete. But independently of a partial abolition of death in cases of forgery, incendiarism, minor thefts, et cætera, I would wish that, from the present time, in all the greater offenses, the Judge should be obliged to propose the following question to the Jury: "*Has the accused acted from Passion or from Interest?*" And in case the Jury decide "*the accused acted from Passion,*" then there should be no sentence of death.

Let not the opposite party deceive themselves; this question of the penalty of death gains ground every day. Before long, the world will unanimously solve it on the side of mercy. During the past century, punishments have become gradually milder: the rack has disappeared, the wheel has disappeared; and now the guillotine is shaken.

This mistaken punishment will leave France, we hope ; and, please God, it will depart limping, for we itch to give it some good kicks.

It must ask hospitality of some barbarous people,—not of Turkey, which is becoming civilized, not of the savages, for they will not have it :³ but let it descend some steps of the ladder of civilization, and seek refuge in Spain, or in Russia !

In the early ages, the social edifice rested on three columns, the priest, the king and the headsman. It is a long time since a voice exclaimed, “*The gods have departed !*” Lately another voice has cried, “*The kings have departed !*” It is now full time that a third voice shall be raised to say, “*The executioner must go !*”

Thus the barbarous usages of the olden times fall one by one ; thus Providence completes modern regeneration.

To those who regret the gods, we say, “God remains !” To those who regret the Kings, we say, “Our Country remains !” But to those who could regret the Executioner we can say nothing.

Let it not be supposed that social order will depart with the scaffold ; the social building will not fall from wanting this hideous key-stone. Civilization is nothing but a series of

transformations. For what then do I ask your aid? The civilization of penal laws. The gentle laws of Christ will penetrate at last into the Code, and shine through its enactments. We shall look on crime as a disease, and its physicians shall displace the judges, its hospitals displace the galleys. Liberty and health shall be alike. We shall pour balm and oil where we formerly applied iron and fire; evil will be treated in charity, instead of in anger. This change will be simple and sublime. The Cross shall displace the Gibbet. That is all.

15 MARCH, 1832.

A COMEDY
APROPOS OF A TRAGEDY

NOTE

We have considered it proper to reprint here the sort of preface in the form of dialogue which follows, and which appeared in the fourth edition of *The Last Day of a Condemned*. We must remember, in reading it, that it was in the midst of political, moral, and literary discussion that the first editions of this work were published. (Edition de 1832.)

PERSONAGES

MADAME DE BLINVAL

THE CHEVALIER

ERGASTE

AN ELEGIAC POET

A PHILOSOPHER

A FAT MAN

A THIN MAN

WOMEN

A LACKEY

A SALON

AN ELEGIAC POET, *reading.*

.
.

The next day, footsteps were seen in the forest,
A dog, whining, wandered along the banks of the
river,
And when the damsel all in tears
Returned, her heart full of fears,
To watch from the very old tower of an antique
châtel,
She heard her sad sobs, the sad Isaure,
But she heard no more, the mandore
Of the handsome minstrel !

ALL THE AUDIENCE.

Bravo ! Charming ! Ravishing !
They clap their hands.

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

There is in that ending an indefinable
mystery which brings tears to the eyes.

THE ELEGIAC POET, *modestly.*

The catastrophe is hidden.

THE CHEVALIER, *throwing up his head.*
Mandore, minstrel, so romantic !

THE ELEGIAC POET.

Yes, sir, but only the reasonably romantic,
the true romantic. What would you have ?
We must make some concessions.

THE CHEVALIER.

Concessions ! concessions ! That is how
taste declines. I would give all the romantic
verses in the world for this simple quatrain :

So by Pride and by Cythere,
Handsome Bernard is warned
That the Art of Loving would on Saturday
Come to sup with the Art of Pleasing.

There is true poetry. *The Art of Loving
supping on Saturday with the Art of Pleasing !*
Well and good ! But to-day it is *the man-
dore, the minstrel*. We no longer have fugitive
poetry. If I were a poet, I would write
fugitive poetry, but I, *I* am not a poet.

THE ELEGIAC POET.

However, the elegies . . .

THE CHEVALIER.

Fugitive poetry, sir ! (*Aside to Madame de
Blinval*) And then *châtel* is not French ; we
say *castel*.

SOMEONE, *to the Elegiac Poet.*

Note, sir. You say the *antique* châtel, why not the *Gothic*?

THE ELEGIAC POET.

Gothic is not in the verse.

SOMEONE.

Ah! That is different.

THE ELEGIAC POET, *continuing.*

You see, sir, we must limit ourselves. I am not one of those who wish to disorganize French verse, and lead us back to the time of Rousard and of Brébeuf. I am romantic, but in moderation. And so in the emotions. I like the soft, the dreamy, the melancholy, but never the bloody, never the horrible. Veil the catastrophes. I know there are people, fools, with delirious imaginations who—Stop, ladies, have you read the new novel?

THE LADIES.

What novel?

THE ELEGIAC POET.

The Last Day . . .

THE FAT MAN.

Enough, sir! I know what you are going to say. The title alone upsets my nerves.

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

And mine too. It is a frightful book. I have it here.

THE LADIES.

Let us see, let us see.

They pass the book from hand to hand.

SOMEONE, *reading*.

The Last Day of a . . .

THE FAT MAN.

Pray, madame !

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

Indeed, it is an abominable book, a book which gives one the nightmare, a book that makes one ill.

A WOMAN, *aside*.

I must read it.

THE FAT MAN.

We must confess that custom is becoming more depraved day by day. My God, what a horrible idea, to develop, to analyze, one after another, all the physical sufferings, all the moral tortures of a man condemned to death, on the day of execution. Is it not atrocious? Can you believe, ladies, that a writer has taken this for a theme, and that there is a public for this writer?

THE CHEVALIER.

It is indeed supremely impertinent.

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

And who is this author?

THE FAT MAN.

There was no name on the first edition.

THE ELEGIAC POET.

It is the same who has written two other novels; 'pon my honor, I forget the titles. The first began at the Morgue and ended on the scaffold. In each chapter, there was an ogre who ate a child.

THE FAT MAN.

You have read that, sir?

THE ELEGIAC POET.

Yes, sir, the scene was laid in Iceland.

THE FAT MAN.

In Iceland,—it is frightful.

THE ELEGIAC POET.

In the other he has odes, ballads, and I know not what all, he has also monsters who have *corps bleus*.

THE CHEVALIER, *laughing*.

Corbleu! That ought to make a glorious rhyme.

THE ELEGIAC POET.

He has also published a drama—he calls it a drama—in which is found this beautiful line :

To-morrow, the twenty-fifth of June, one thousand six hundred and fifty-seven.

SOMEONE.

Ah, what verse !

THE ELEGIAC POET.

It could be written in figures, you see, ladies :

To-morrow, 25 June, 1657.

He laughs. They laugh.

THE CHEVALIER.

That is something peculiar to the poetry of to-day.

THE FAT MAN.

Ah ! He does not know how to versify, that fellow ! What is his name ?

THE ELEGIAC POET.

He has a name as difficult to pronounce as it is to remember. It has Goth, Visigoth, and Ostrogoth in it.

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

He is a nasty man.

THE FAT MAN.

An abominable man.

A YOUNG WOMAN.

Some one who knows him has told me . . .

THE FAT MAN.

You know some one who knows him?

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

Yes, and who told me that he is a sweet simple man who lives in retirement, and who passes his days in playing with his little children.

THE POET.

And his nights in dreaming of works of darkness. It is singular there is a verse that I found quite naturally :

And his nights in dreaming of works of *ténèbres* (darkness). With a good pause. I have only the other line to find. Good ! *Funèbres* (funereal).

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

Quidquid tenabat dicere, versus erat.

THE FAT MAN.

You say that this author has little children. Impossible, madame. When he has written such a work as that ! Such an atrocious novel !

SOMEONE.

But what is the object of the work?

THE POET.

How should I know?

A PHILOSOPHER.

It seems to have for an object the abolition of capital punishment.

THE FAT MAN.

A horror, say I!

THE CHEVALIER.

Ah! so it is a duel with the executioner.

THE POET.

He wishes the guillotine all sorts of terrible things.

THE THIN MAN.

I can imagine it; full of denunciations.

THE FAT MAN.

Not at all. There is hardly two pages of it about capital punishment. All the rest is about the sensations.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

There is the mistake. The subject merits reasoning. A drama or a novel proves nothing. And besides, I have read the book, and it is bad.

THE POET.

Detestable! Is that art? And then too, this criminal, do I know him? No. What has he done? No one knows. Perhaps he is a very bad rascal. No one has the right to interest me in some one I do not know.

THE FAT MAN.

He certainly has not the right to shock his reader by physical suffering. When I see a tragedy, some one kills himself, very good! That makes no difference to me. But a novel makes your hair stand on end, gives you goose-flesh and bad dreams. I was laid up in bed for two days after having read it.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Added to that it is a cold and stiff book.

THE POET.

Book! Book!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Yes—and as you said a while ago, sir, it is not of the genuine æsthetic sort. I am interested in the abstract. I see no personality in it equal to my own, and the style is neither simple nor clear. That is how you put it, is it not?

THE POET.

Undoubtedly, undoubtedly. Personalities are not necessary.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

The condemned man is not interesting.

THE POET.

How is he interesting? He has committed crime and has no remorse. I would have done differently. I would have related the story of my condemned. Born of honest parents. A good education. Love. Jealousy. A crime which is not a crime. And then, remorse! remorse! plenty of remorse! But the human laws are implacable; he must die. And then I would have treated the question of capital punishment. All in good season.

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

Ah! Ah!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Pardon me. The book, according to you, proves nothing. A special case does not govern all.

THE POET.

Well! so much the better; why not have chosen for a hero, for instance—Malesherbes, the virtuous Malesherbes? his last day, his prayers? Oh! then, we would have had a fine and noble spectacle! I would have cried, I would have shuddered, I would have wanted to mount the scaffold with him.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Not I.

THE CHEVALIER.

Nor I. He was a revolutionary, at the bottom, your M. de Malesherbes.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Malesherbes' scaffold proves nothing against capital punishment in general.

THE FAT MAN.

Capital punishment ! Why should we bother about that. What has it done to you ? This author must certainly be very ill-bred to come and give us the nightmare on this subject with his book !

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

Ah ! Yes, he must have a very bad heart !

THE FAT MAN.

He forces us to look into prisons, into the galleys, into Bicêtre. It is very disagreeable. We know very well that they are filthy places ; but what does it matter to society ?

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

Those who have made the laws are not children.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Ah ! meanwhile, in presenting things truthfully . . .

THE THIN MAN.

That is precisely what he lacks ; truth. What can a poet know of such things ? He must be at least a public prosecutor. Stop, I have read, in a review which a journal had on this book, that the condemned said nothing when they read his sentence ; very good, but I have seen a condemned man, who, at that point, gave a loud cry—you see.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Allow me . . .

THE THIN MAN.

Wait ; gentlemen, the guillotine, the Grève, are in bad taste ;—and that proves that this is a book that corrupts the taste, and renders you incapable of pure fresh emotions. These are the supporters of wholesome literature. I would like to be a member of the Academie Française . . . But here is Ergaste, who is one already. What do you think of *The Last Day of a Condemned* ?

ERGASTE.

Upon my word, sir, I have not, and will not, read it. I dined to-day with Madame

de Sénange, and the Marquise de Morival spoke of it to the Duc de Melcourt. They say there are personalities against the magistracy, and, above all, against President d'Alimont. The Abbé de Horicour has been insulted. It seems that there is a chapter against religion, and a chapter against monarchy. If I were the royal prosecutor ! . . .

THE CHEVALIER.

Ah ! yes, indeed, royal prosecutor ! How about the charter, and the liberty of the press ? Meanwhile a poet tries to suppress capital punishment and you agree that it is odious. Ah ! ah ! under the old régime, who would have been allowed to publish a work against torture ! . . . But, since the fall of the Bastille, we can write anything. Books do frightful harm.

THE FAT MAN.

Frightful !—We were all calm, thinking of nothing. It is true that in France we occasionally cut off a head here and there ; but only two or three, at the most, in a week. And all is done without noise and without scandal. No one says anything. No one thinks of it. Not at all, until this book appears. . . . This book which gives you a horrible headache !

THE THIN MAN.

Think of the feelings of a juryman after having read it!

ERGASTE.

It would trouble his conscience.

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

Ah! books! books! Who said that of a novel?

THE POET.

It is certain that books are very often a poison ruinous to social order.

THE THIN MAN.

Without taking in consideration speech, which the romantiques would also like to revolutionize.

THE POET.

Consider, sir, there are romantiques and romantiques.

THE THIN MAN.

Bad taste, bad taste.

ERGASTE.

You are right. Very bad taste.

THE THIN MAN.

There is no answering that.

THE PHILOSOPHER, *leaning on a ladies' arm-chair.*

There are things said in it that are not mentioned even in the rue Mouffetard.

ERGASTE.

Ah ! The abominable book !

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

Hi ! don't throw it into the fire. It is borrowed.

THE CHEVALIER.

Talk of to-day. All is depraved ; taste and manners. Does it remind you of our days, Madame de Blinval ?

MADAME DE BLINVAL.

No, sir, not at all.

THE SUITOR.

We were the gayest, easy going, set of people. Always beautiful fêtes, and pretty verses. It was charming. Was there ever anything so gallant as the madrigal which M. de la Harpe composed in honor of the grand ball which Madame la Maréchale de Mailly gave in seventeen hundred and . . . the year of the execution of Damiens ?

THE FAT MAN, *sighing*.

Happy days! Now manners are horrible, and books are likewise. It is Boileau's beautiful line:

And the fall of the arts follows the decadence of manners.

THE PHILOSOPHER, *aside to the poet*.

Do they sup in this house?

THE POET.

Yes, by and by.

THE THIN MAN.

Meanwhile they wish to abolish capital punishment, and in order to do so write novels that are cruel, immoral and in bad taste, such as *The Last Day of a Condemned*.

THE FAT MAN.

Stop, my dear fellow, let us speak no more of this atrocious book; and, since I have met you, tell me, what are you going to do about the man whose petition we rejected three weeks ago?

THE THIN MAN.

Ah! Have a little patience! I must go. I must have air. On my return. If that is too late, however, I will write to my deputy . . .

A LACKEY, *entering*.

Supper is served.

I.

BICÊTRE.

Condemned to death !

These five weeks have I dwelt with this idea : always alone with it, always frozen by its presence ; always bent under its weight.

Formerly—for it seems to me rather years than weeks since I was a being like any other : each day, each hour, each minute had its idea. My mind, youthful and rich, was full of fancies, which it developed successively, without order or aim, but weaving inexhaustible arabesques on the poor and coarse web of life. Sometimes it was of young girls, sometimes of unbounded possessions, then of battles gained, next of theatres full of sound and light, and then again the young girls and shadowy walks at night beneath spreading chestnut-trees. There was a perpetual revel in my imagination : I might think on what I chose, I was free.

But now, I am a captive ! Bodily in irons in a dungeon, and mentally imprisoned in one idea. One horrible, one hideous, one

unconquerable idea ! I have only one thought, one conviction, one certitude : Condemned to death !

Whatever I do, that frightful thought is always here, like a spectre, beside me, solitary and jealous, banishing all else, haunting me forever, and shaking me with its two icy hands whenever I wish to turn my head away, or to close my eyes. It glides into all forms in which my mind seeks to shun it ; mixes itself, like a horrible chant, with all the words which are addressed to me : presses against me even to the odious gratings of my prison. It haunts me while awake,—spies on my convulsive slumbers, and reappears, a vivid incubus, in my dreams under the form of a knife.

I have just started from a troubled sleep, in which I was pursued by this thought : and I made an effort to say to myself, “ Oh ! it was but a dream ! ” Well, even before my heavy eyes could read the fatal truth in the dreadful reality which surrounds me, on the damp and reeking dungeon-walls, in the pale rays of my night-lamp, in the rough material of my prison-garb, on the sombre visage of the sentry whose cap gleams through the grating of the door,—it seems to me that already a voice has murmured in my ear : Condemned to death !

II.

It was a beautiful morning at the close of August.

My trial had already lasted three days ; my name and accusation had collected each morning a knot of spectators, who crowded the benches of the court, as ravens surround a corpse. During three days all the assembly of judges, witnesses, lawyers, and officers, had passed and repassed as a phantasmagoria before my troubled vision. The first two nights, through uneasiness and terror, I had been unable to sleep ; on the third, I had slept, from fatigue and exhaustion. I had left the jury deliberating at midnight, and was taken back to the heap of straw in my prison, where I instantly fell into a profound sleep, the sleep of forgetfulness. These were the first hours of repose I had obtained, after long watchfulness.

I was still buried in this oblivion when they sent to have me awakened, and my sound slumber was not broken by the heavy step and iron shoes of the jailer, by the clanking of his keys, or the rusty grating of the lock, to

rouse me from my lethargy, it required his harsh voice in my ear, his rough hand on my arm. "Come, rise directly!" I opened my eyes, and started up from my straw bed: it was already daylight. At this moment, through the high and narrow window of my cell, I saw on the ceiling of the next corridor (the only firmament I was allowed to see) that yellow reflection by which eyes, accustomed to the darkness of a prison, recognize sunshine. And oh! how I love sunshine!

"It is a fine day!" said I to the jailer.

He remained a moment without answering me, as if uncertain whether it was worth while to expend a word; then, as if with an effort he coolly murmured:

"Very likely."

I remained motionless, my senses half sleeping, with smiling lips, and my eyes fixed on that soft golden reflection which reverberated on the ceiling.

"What a lovely day!" I repeated.

"Yes," answered the man, "they are waiting for you."

These few words, like a web which stops the flight of an insect, flung me back into the reality of my position. I pictured to myself instantly, as in a flash of lightning, that sombre court of justice, the bench of judges, in their robes of sanguine hue, the three rows

of stupid-looking witnesses, two gendarmes at the extremity of my bench ; black robes waving, and the heads of the crowd clustering in the depth of the shadow, while I fancied that I felt upon me the fixed look of the twelve jurymen, who had sat up while I slept.

I rose ; my teeth chattered, my hands trembled, my limbs were so weak that at the first step I had nearly fallen : however, I followed the jailer.

The two gendarmes waited for me at the door-way of the cell. They replaced my fetters. They had a small complicated lock which they closed carefully. I yield mechanically to them. It was like placing a machine on a machine.

We traversed an interior court : and the balmy air of morning reanimated me. I raised my head. The sky was cloudless, and the warm rays of the sun partially intercepted by the tall chimneys traced brilliant angles of light on the high and sombre walls of the prison. It was indeed a delicious day.

We ascended a winding staircase ; we passed a corridor ; then another ; then a third : and then a low door was opened. A current of hot air, laden with noise, rushed from it : it was the breath of the crowd in the court of assizes which I then entered.

On my appearance, the hall resounded with the clank of arms, and the hum of voices :

benches were moved noisily; and while I crossed that long chamber between two masses of people who were walled in by soldiers, I painfully felt myself the centre of attraction to all those fixed and gaping looks.

At this moment I perceived that I was without fetters; but I could not recall where or when they had been removed.

Then there was deep silence. I had reached my place at the bar. The instant that the tumult ceased in the crowd, it ceased also in my ideas: a sudden clearness of perception came to me, and I at once understood plainly, what until then I could not discover in my confused state of mind, that the decisive moment was come! I was brought there to hear my sentence!

Explain it who can, from the manner in which this idea came to my mind, it caused me no terror! The windows were open; the air, and the sounds of the city came freely through them: the room was as light as for a wedding; the cheerful rays of the sun traced here and there the luminous forms of the windows, sometimes lengthened on the flooring, sometimes spreading on a table, sometimes broken by the angles of the walls; and from the brilliant square of each window, the rays fell through the air in dancing golden beams. The judges, at the extremity of the hall,

bore a satisfied appearance,—probably from the anticipation of their labors being soon completed. The face of the president, softly lighted by a reflected sunbeam, had a calm and amiable expression ; and a young counsel conversed almost gaily with a handsome woman in a rose bonnet who sat near him.

The jury alone looked wan and exhausted ; but this was apparently from the fatigue of having sat up all night. Nothing in their countenances indicated men who would pass sentence of death ; and in the faces of these good bourgeois I could divine nothing but a great desire to sleep.

Opposite to me, a window stood wide open. I heard laughter in the flower market on the quay—beneath ; and on the sill of the window, a graceful plant, illumined by sunshine, played in the breeze.

How could any sinister idea be formed amongst so many soothing sensations ? Surrounded by air and sunshine, I could think of naught save liberty ; hope shone within me, as the day shone around me ; and I awaited my sentence with confidence, as one daily calculates on liberty and life.

In the meantime my counsel arrived. They had been waiting for him. He had just breakfasted freely and with a good appetite. Taking his place he leaned towards me with a smile.

"I have hopes!" said he.

"Oh, surely!" I replied in the same light tone and smiling also.

"Yes," returned he; "I know nothing as yet of the verdict, but they have doubtless acquitted you of premeditation, and then it will be only hard labor for life."

"What do you mean, sir?" replied I, indignantly; "I would a hundred times prefer death!"

Yes, death! and, besides, said an inward voice, what do I risk in saying that? Has a sentence of death ever been pronounced except at midnight, in a dark and sombre hall lighted only by torches, and whilst a cold winter's rain was pouring? But in the month of August, at eight o'clock in the morning, on such a fine day, and with such good jurymen it is impossible! And my eyes wandered to the pretty yellow flower in the sun.

Suddenly the president, who had only waited for my counsel, desired me to rise. The soldiers carried arms; and, with an electric movement, all the assembly rose at the same instant. An insignificant nobody placed at a table below the tribunal, who was, I think, the recorder, read the verdict which the jury had pronounced during my absence. A sickly chill passed over my frame; I leaned against the wall to avoid falling.

"Counsel, have you anything to say why this sentence should not be passed?" demanded the president.

I felt that *I* had much to say; but I had not the power—my tongue was cleaving to my palate.

My counsel then rose.

His endeavor appeared to be, to mitigate the verdict of the jury, and to substitute the punishment of hard labor for life—by naming which he had rendered me so indignant!

This indignation must again have been powerful within me, to conquer the thousand emotions which distracted my thoughts. I wished to repeat aloud what I had already said to him: "Rather a hundred times, death," but my breath failed, and I could only grasp him by the arm, crying, with convulsive strength, "No!"

The attorney-general replied against my counsel's arguments; and I listened to him with a stupid satisfaction. The judges then left the court, soon returned, and the president read my sentence.

"Condemned to death!" cried the crowd: and as I was led away, the assembly pressed on my steps with avidity, while I walked on, confused and nearly in unconsciousness. A revolution had taken place within me. Until

that sentence of death I had felt myself breathe, palpitate, exist, like other beings. Now I felt clearly that a barrier existed between me and the world. Nothing appeared to me under the same aspect as hitherto. Those large and luminous windows, that fair sunshine, that pure sky,—all was pale and ghastly, the color of a winding sheet. Those men, women and children, who pressed on my path, seemed to me like phantoms.

At the foot of the stairs, a black and dirty prison-cart was waiting: as I entered it, I happened to look around. “A condemned man!” shouted the people, running towards the cart. Through the cloud which seemed to me to interpose between me and all things, I distinguished two young girls who gazed at me with eager eyes. “Good!” said the youngest, clapping her hands. “It will take place in six weeks!”

III.

Condemned to death !

Well, why not ? *All mankind*, I remember once reading, *are condemned to death, with indefinite respites*. How then is my position altered ?

Since the hour when my sentence was pronounced, how many are dead who calculated upon a long life ! How many are gone before me, who, young, free, and in good health, had fully intended to be present when my head fell in the Place de Grève. How many, between this and then, perhaps, who now walk and breathe in the fresh air anywhere they please, will die before me !

And then, what has life for me, that I should regret ? In truth, only the dull twilight and black bread of a prison, a portion of watery soup from the trough of the convicts ; to be treated rudely, I, who have been refined by education, to be brutalized by turnkeys without feeling ; not to see a human being who thinks me worthy of a word, or whom I could address : incessantly to

shudder at what I have done, and what may be done to me: these are nearly the only advantages of which the executioner can deprive me.

Ah! nevertheless, it is horrible!

IV.

The black cart brought me here, to this hideous Bicêtre.

Seen from afar, the appearance of that edifice is rather majestic. It spreads to the horizon in front of a hill; and at a distance retains something of its ancient splendor—the look of a royal château. But as you approach it, the palace changes to a ruin; and the dilapidated gables shock the sight. There is a mixture of poverty and disgrace soiling its royal faces: without glass or shutters to the windows, but massive crossed-bars of iron instead; against which are pressed, here and there, the ghastly face, of felon, or madmen!

It is life seen close at hand.

V.

I had no sooner arrived here than the hand of force was laid on me, and numerous precautions were taken: neither knife nor fork was allowed for my repasts; and the *camisole de force* (strait-jacket), a species of sack made of sail-cloth, imprisoned my arms. They were answerable for my life, so the jailers would have for six or seven weeks their responsibilities; as it was requisite to keep me safe and in good condition for the Place de Grève.

For the first few days I was treated with a degree of attention which was horrible to me; the civilities of a turnkey savor of a scaffold. Luckily, at the end of some days, habit resumed its influence; they mixed me with the other prisoners in a general brutality, and made no more of those unusual distinctions of politeness which continually kept the executioner in my memory. This was not the only amelioration. My youth, my docility, the cares of the chaplain of the prison, and above all some words in Latin which I addressed to the keeper, who did not understand them, procured for me a walk once a

week with the other prisoners, and removed the strait-jacket with which I was paralyzed. After considerable hesitation, they have also given me pens, paper, ink, and a night-lamp.

Every Sunday after mass, I am allowed to walk in the prison-court at the hour of recreation : there I talk with the prisoners, which is inevitable. They are good fellows, these wretches ; they tell me their adventures, enough to horrify one ; but I know they are proud of them.

They taught me their argot, *à rouscailler bigorne*, as they called it. A hideous abortion of the language. On hearing it spoken, the effect is like the shaking of dusty rags before one.

These men at least pity me ; and they alone do so. The jailers, the turnkeys—and I wish them no harm—gossip and laugh, and speak of me in my presence, as though I were a thing.

VI.

I said to myself:

As I have the means of writing, why should I not do it? But of what shall I write? Placed between four walls of cold and bare stone, without freedom for my steps, without horizon for my eyes, my sole occupation to watch mechanically the progress of that square of light which the grating of my door marks on the sombre wall opposite, and, as I said before, ever alone with one idea, an idea of crime, punishment, death! Can I have anything to say, I who have no more to do in this world? And what shall I find in this dry and empty brain which is worthy the trouble of being written?

Why not? If all around me is monotonous and colorless, is there not within me a tempest, a struggle, a tragedy? This fixed idea which possesses me, does it not take every hour, every instant a new form, becoming more hideous as the time approaches? Why should I not try to describe for myself all the violent and unknown feelings I experience in my outcast situation? Certainly the

material is plentiful ; and, however shortened my life may be, there will still be sufficient in the anguish, the terrors, the tortures, which will fill it from this hour until my last, to exhaust my pen and ink ! Besides, the only means to decrease my suffering in this anguish will be to observe it closely ; and to describe it will give me an occupation.

And then what I write may not be without its use. This journal of my sufferings, hour by hour, minute by minute, torment after torment, if I have strength to carry it on to the moment when it will be physically impossible for me to continue—this history necessarily unfinished, yet as complete as possible, of my sensations, may it not give a grand and deep lesson ? will not there be in this process of agonizing thought, in this ever increasing progress of pain, in this intellectual dissection of a condemned man, more than one lesson for those who condemn ? Perhaps the perusal may render them less heedless, when throwing a human life into what they call “the scale of justice ?” Perhaps they have never reflected on the slow succession of tortures conveyed in the expeditious formula of a sentence of death ! Have they ever paused on the important idea, that, in the man whose days they shorten, there is an immortal spirit which had calculated on life,

a soul which is not prepared for death? No! they see nothing but the execution; and doubtless think that, for the condemned, there is nothing anterior or subsequent!

These sheets shall undeceive them. Published, perhaps, some day, they will call their attention a few moments to the suffering of the mind, for it is this which they do not consider. They triumph in the power of being able to destroy the body, almost without making it suffer. What an inferior consideration is this! What is mere physical pain, compared to that of the mind? A day will come—and perhaps these memoirs, the last revelations of a solitary wretch, will have contributed . . .

Unless after my death the wind carries away these sheets of paper into the muddy court; or unless they melt with rain when pasted to the broken windows of a jailer.

VII.

Suppose that what I write might one day be useful to others—might make the judge pause in his decision, and might save the wretched, innocent or guilty, from the agony to which I am condemned—why should I do it? What matters it? When my life has been taken, what will it be to me if they take the lives of others? Have I really thought of such folly? To throw down the scaffold which I had fatally mounted!

What! sunshine, spring-time, fields full of flowers and birds, the clouds, trees, nature, liberty, life, these are to be mine no more!

Ah! it is myself I must try to save! Is it really true that this cannot be, that I must die soon, to-morrow, to-day perhaps; is it all thus? Oh, God! a dreadful idea of dashing my head against the prison wall!

VIII.

Let us consider what time remains to me.

Three days of delay, after sentence is pronounced, for the prisoner's final plea to annul it.

Forgotten for a week in the court of assizes, after which the *pieces*, as they are called, are sent to the minister.

Forgotten for a fortnight at the minister's, who does not even know that there are such papers, although he is supposed to transmit them, after examination, to the *Cour de Cassation*.

Then classification, numbering, registering ; the guillotine-list is loaded, and none must go before their turn !

A fortnight more waiting to see that no injustice is done.

At last the court assembles, usually on Tuesday, rejects twenty pleas together, and sends all back to the minister, who sends them back to the attorney-general, who sends them back to the executioner. Three more days.

On the morning of the fourth day, the deputy of the attorney-general says to himself

as he arranges his cravat: "This business certainly must be finished;" then if the recorder's deputy has no breakfast with friends which prevents him, the order of the execution is drafted, revised, engrossed, and sent out; and the following morning, from day-break, the noise of erecting the scaffold, in the Place de Grève is heard, and in the cross-streets a commotion of hoarse voices.

Altogether six weeks. The young girl's calculation was right! Thus I have now been at least five weeks, perhaps six, for I dare not reckon! in this cell at Bicêtre: nay, I think I have been even three days more!

IX.

I have just made my will.

What was the use of this? I have to pay my expenses; and all I possess will scarcely suffice. The guillotine is expensive.

I leave a mother, I leave a wife, I leave a child.

A little girl three years old, gentle, delicate, with large black eyes, and chestnut hair.

She was two years and one month old when I saw her the last time.

Thus, after my death, there will be three women without son, without husband, without father; three orphans in different degrees; three widows by act of law.

I admit that I am justly punished; but these innocent creatures, what have they done? No matter; they are dishonored, they are ruined; and this is justice.

It is not so much on account of my poor old mother, that I feel thus wretched; she is so advanced in years, she will not survive the blow; or if she still linger a short time, her feelings are so blunted, that she will suffer but little.

Nor is it for my wife that I feel the most ; she is already in miserable health, and weak in mind.

Her reason will give way, in which case her spirit will not suffer while the mind slumbers as in death.

But my daughter, my child, my poor little Marie, who is laughing, playing, singing at this moment, and who dreams of no evil ! Ah ! it is the thought of her which unmans me !

X.

Here is a description of my prison.

Eight feet square; four walls of granite, with a flagged pavement.

To the right of the door is a kind of nook by way of alcove, in which is thrown a bundle of straw, where the prisoner is supposed to rest and sleep, dressed, winter, as in summer, in slight linen clothing.

Over my head, instead of a ceiling, is a black ogive vault, and instead of curtains, a thick canopy of cobwebs, hanging like tattered pennons.

For the rest, no windows, not even a ventilator; and only one door, where iron hides the wood.

I mistake; towards the top of the door there is a sort of window, or rather an opening of nine inches square, crossed by a grating, and which the turnkey can close at night.

Outside there is a long corridor lighted and aired by means of narrow ventilators high in the wall. It is divided into compartments of masonry, which communicate by a series of doors; each of these compartments serves as

an ante-chamber to a dungeon, like mine ; in these dungeons are confined felons condemned by the governor of the prison to hard labor. The first three cells are kept for prisoners under sentence of death, as being nearest to the jail, therefore most convenient for the jailer.

These dungeons are the only remains of the ancient château of Bicêtre, such as it was built in the fifteenth century by the Cardinal of Winchester, he who caused Jeanne of Arc to be burned. I overheard this description from some *sightseers* who came to my den, yesterday, and who stared at me from a distance, as at a wild beast in a menagerie. The turnkey had had five sous.

I have omitted to say, that, night and day there is a sentry on guard outside the door of my cell ; and I never raised my eyes towards the square grating, without encountering his eyes, open, and fixed on me.

For the rest, we may suppose that there is air and daylight in this box of stone.

XI.

As there is yet no appearance of daylight, what could be done during the night? An idea just occurred to me. I would arise and examine, by my lamp, the walls of my cell. They are covered with writings, with drawings, fantastic figures, and names which mix with and efface each other. It would appear that each prisoner had wished to leave behind him some trace here at least. Pencil, chalk, charcoal—black, white, gray letters. Sometimes deep carvings upon the stone. If my mind were at ease, I could take an interest in this strange book, which is developed, page by page, to my eyes, on each stone of this dungeon. I should like to recompose these fragments of thought; to trace a character for each name; to give sense and life to these mutilated inscriptions, to these dismembered phrases.

Above my pillow there are two flaming hearts, pierced with an arrow; and beneath is written: *Amour pour la vie*. Poor wretch! it was not a long engagement!

Beside this, a three-sided cocked hat, with a small figure coarsely done beneath, and the words: *Vive l'Empereur ! 1824.*

More flaming hearts, with this inscription, characteristic in a prison: *I love and adore Mathieu Danvin.* JACQUES.

On the opposite wall is the name of *Papa-voine*. The *P* is worked in arabesques and embellished with care.

A couplet of an obscene song.

A cap of liberty, cut rather deeply into the stone, with the words *Bories, La Republique !* beneath. He was one of the four subaltern officers of la Rochelle. Poor young man ! How horrible is the idea of their fancied political necessity, to give the frightful reality of the guillotine for an opinion, a reverie, an abstraction ! And I ! *I* have complained of its severity ! I who have really committed crime, who have spilled blood !

I can go no farther in my research ! I have just discovered, drawn with chalk in the corner of the wall, that dreadful image, the representation of that scaffold, which even at this moment is perhaps being put up for my execution ! The lamp had nearly fallen out of my hands !

XII.

I returned precipitately to sit on my straw-bed ; my head sunk on my knees. Then my childish fear was dissipated, and a wild curiosity forced me to continue the examination of my walls.

Beside the name of Papavoine, I tore away an enormous cobweb, thick with dust, and filling the angle of the wall. Under this web, there were four or five names perfectly legible, among others of which nothing remained but a smear on the wall—DAUTAN, 1815.—POULAIN, 1818. — JEAN MARTIN, 1821. — CASTAING, 1823. I have read these names, and frightful recollections crowded on me. Dautan was the man who cut his brother in quarters, and who went at night to Paris and threw the head into a fountain, and the body into a sewer. Poulain assassinated his wife. Jean Martin shot his father with a pistol as the old man opened a window : and Castaing was the physician who poisoned his friend ; and, while attending the illness he had caused, instead of an antidote, gave him more poison. Then, next to these names, was Papavoine,

the horrible madman who killed children by blows upon the head with a knife.

These, said I, as a shudder passed over me, these, then, have been my predecessors in this cell. Here, on the same pavement where I am, they conceived their last thoughts, these fearful homicides! Within these walls, in this narrow square, their last steps have turned like those of a caged wild beast. They succeeded each other at short intervals; it seems that this dungeon does not remain empty. They have left the place warm, and it is to me they have left it. In my turn I shall join them in the felons' cemetery of Clamart, where the grass grows so well!

I am neither visionary nor superstitious: but it is probable these ideas caused in my brain a feverish excitement: for, whilst I thus wandered, all at once these five fatal names appeared as though written in flames on the dark wall; noises, louder and louder, burst on my ears: a dull, red light, filled my eyes, and it seemed to me that my cell became full of men—strangers to me; each bore his severed head in his left hand; and carried it by the mouth, for the hair had been removed: each raised his right hand at me, except the parricide.⁴

I shut my eyes in horror: and then I saw all, even more distinctly!

Dream, vision or reality, I should have gone mad, if a sudden impression had not recalled me in time. I was near fainting, when I felt something cold crawling over my naked foot. It was the bloated spider, whom I had disturbed.

This recalled my wandering senses. Those dreadful spectres, then, were only the fumes of an empty and convulsed brain. Chimera like Macbeth's! The dead are dead, these men certainly. They are safely jailed in the grave. The sepulchre is a prison from whence none escape. The door of the tomb opens not from within.

XIII.

I have lately witnessed a hideous sight.

As soon as it was day, the prison was full of noise. I heard heavy doors open and shut; the grating of locks and bolts; the clanking of bunches of keys; the stairs creaking from top to bottom with quick steps; and voices calling and answering from the opposite extremes of the long corridors. My neighbors in the dungeons, the felons at hard labor, were more gay than usual. All Bicêtre seemed laughing, singing, running or dancing. I, alone silent in this uproar, alone motionless in this tumult, astonished and attentive I listened.

A jailer passed.

I ventured to call and ask him "if there were a fête in the prison?"

"A fête, if you choose to call it so," answered he; "this is the day that they fetter the galley-slaves, who are to set off to-morrow for Toulon. Would you like to see them? It would amuse you."

For a solitary recluse, indeed, a spectacle of any kind was an event of interest, however odious it might be; and I accepted the amusement.

The jailer, after taking the usual precautions to secure me, conducted me into a little empty cell, without a vestige of furniture; and only a grated window,—but still a real window,—against which one could lean, and through which one could actually perceive the sky.

“Here,” said he, “you will see and hear all that happens. You will be alone in your box, like the king!”

He then went out, closing on me locks, bolts and bars.

The window looked into a square and rather wide court, on every side of which was a large six-storied stone edifice. Nothing could seem more wretched, naked and miserable to the eye, than this quadruple façade, pierced by a multitude of grated windows, against which were pressed a crowd of thin and wan faces, placed one above the other, like the stones of a wall; and all as it were, framed in the inter-crossings of iron bars. They were prisoners, spectators of the ceremony, until their turn came to be the actors. One might have called them spirits in agony of purgatory looking into hell.

All looked in silence into the still empty court. Among these faded and dull countenances there shone, here and there, some eyes which gleamed like sparks of fire.

The block of prisons that surround the court was not complete. One of the fronts, that facing me, was cut about the middle, and was joined together by an iron grating. This grating opened upon a second court smaller than the first, and, like, surrounded by black walls.

All around the principal court were stone benches. In the centre rose an iron post, intended to support a lantern.

At twelve o'clock, a large gateway in the court was opened. A cart, escorted by soldiers, rolled heavily into the court, with a rattling of irons. It was the convict-guard with the chains.

At the same instant, as if this sound awaked all the noise of the prison, the spectators of the windows, who had hitherto been silent and motionless, burst forth into cries of joy, songs, menaces, and imprecations, mixed with hoarse laughter. It was like witnessing a masque of demons; each visage bore a grimace, every hand was thrust through the bars, their voices yelled, their eyes flashed, and I was startled to see so many gleams amidst these ashes.

Meanwhile the galley warders quietly began their work. One mounted on the cart, and threw to his comrades the fetters, the iron collars, and the linen clothing; while others

stretched long chains to the end of the court, and the captain tried each link, by striking it on the pavement; all of which took place under the mocking raillery of the prisoners, and the loud laughter of the convicts for whom they were being prepared.

When all was ready, a fellow in silver braid, who was called Monsieur l'Inspecteur, gave an order to the superintendent of the prison, and two or three low doors poured forth into the court a collection of hideous, yelling, ragged men; these werè the galley-convicts.

Their entry caused increased pleasure at the windows. Some of them, being well known in the galleys, were saluted with applause and acclamation, which they received with a sort of proud modesty. Several wore a kind of hat of prison straw, plaited by themselves, and formed into some fantastic shape; these men were always the most applauded. One in particular excited transports of enthusiasm; a youth of seventeen, with quite a girlish face. He had just come out of his cell where he had been a week in solitary confinement. From his straw bedding he had made himself a dress, which enveloped him from head to foot; and he entered the court, jumping a somersault with the agility of a serpent. He was a mountebank condemned for theft, and there was a furious

clapping of hands and a volley of cheers for him. The galley convicts responded, and there was something frightful in this exchange of compliments between those who were galley convicts and those who hoped to be.

As they arrived they were pushed between two rows of guards into the little grated court, where they awaited the visit of the doctors. It was there that all tried a last effort to avoid the journey, alleging some excuse of ill-health, sore eyes, lame leg, mutilated hand. But they are almost always found good for the galleys, and then each carelessly resigns himself to his fate, forgetting in a few minutes all his pretended infirmity.

At length, the little grating opens. A warden calls the names in alphabetical order, and they went to stand two and two, companions by similar initials; so that even if a convict had a friend, most likely their chains would divide them from suffering together! Worst of miseries!

When at least thirty have come out they close the grating. A warder drives them in line with his baton and throws in front of each a shirt, jacket and pantaloons of coarse canvas, then makes a sign and all commence to undress. An unexpected incident happens to turn this humiliation into torture.

Up to now the day had been fine enough, and, if the October breeze was rather cool, occasionally the clouds broke and allowed the sun to shine. But no sooner were the convicts undressed and at the moment when they stood naked, awaiting the inspection of the warders, a cold autumn shower suddenly fell in torrents on the uncovered heads and naked bodies of the convicts and on their miserable clothes upon the pavement.

In the twinkling of an eye the court was deserted by all except the warders and the convicts. The sightseers sought shelter under the door-ways.

Meanwhile the rain fell in sheets, a dull silence succeeded the noisy bravadoes; they shivered, their teeth chattered, and their limbs shook in the wet clothes.

One convict only, an old man, retained a sort of gayety: he exclaimed laughing, while wiping himself with his coarse shirt, "This was not in the play-bill!" and shook his fist at the skies.

When they had put on their traveling suits, they were taken in bands of twenty or thirty to the corner of the court where the long chains were extended. At every interval of two feet in these long chains were fastened short transverse chains, and at the extremity of each of the latter was attached a square

iron collar, which opened by means of a hinge in the centre and closed by an iron bolt, which is riveted, for the whole journey, on the convict's neck.

The convicts were ordered to sit down in the mud on the inundated pavement; the iron collars were fitted on them, and two prison-blacksmiths, with portable anvils, riveted the hard, unheated metal, with heavy iron hammers. This was a frightful operation, and even the most hardy turned pale! Each stroke of the hammer, aimed on the anvil resting on their backs, makes the whole form yield: the failure of aim, or the least movement and the skull would be crushed like a walnut-shell.

After this operation they became sombre. Nothing was heard but the rattle of chains and at intervals a heavy blow from a warder's baton and a cry from one of the unruly. There were some who cried; the old ones shuddered and bit their lips. I look with terror at all these sinister profiles in their iron frames.

Thus, after the visit of the doctors, was the visit of the warders and after the warders, that of the blacksmiths. Three acts of this spectacle.

A ray from the sun appeared. It seemed to set fire to their brains. The convicts rose

simultaneously. The five gangs joined hands, so as to form an immense circle, and thus ran round and round in the court, with a rapidity that the eye could hardly follow. They sung some couplets, in their own idiom, to a melody which was sometimes plaintive, sometimes furious, often interrupted by hoarse cries and broken laughter, like delirious ravings: while the chains, clanking together in cadence, formed an accompaniment to a song more harsh than their own noise.

A large trough was now brought in: the guards striking the convicts to make them discontinue their dance, took them to the trough, in which was swimming I know not what sort of herbs in some smoking and dirty-looking liquid. They were to eat it.

Then, having partaken of it, they threw the remainder on the pavement, with their black bread, and began again to dance and sing. This is a liberty which is allowed them on the day they are fettered and the succeeding night.

I gazed on this strange spectacle with such eager and breathless attention, that I totally forgot my own misery. The deepest pity filled my heart, and their laughter made me weep.

Suddenly, in the midst of a profound reverie into which I had fallen, I observed the yelling circle had stopped, and was silent.

Then every eye was turned to the window which I occupied. "The Condemned! the Condemned!" shouted they, pointing their fingers at me; and their bursts of laughter were redoubled.

I was thunderstruck.

I know not where they knew me, or how I was recognized.

"Good-day! good-night!" cried they, with their mocking sneer. One of the youngest, condemned to the galleys for life, turned his shining, leaden face on me, with a look of envy, saying, "He is lucky! he is to be *clipped*! Good-bye, comrade!"

I cannot describe what passed within me. I was indeed their "comrade!" The Grève is sister to Toulon. Nay, I was even lower than they were; the convicts had done me an honor. I shuddered.

Yes! their "comrade!" and a few days later, I would be a spectacle for them.

I remained at the window, motionless, as if paralyzed: but when I saw the five gangs advance, rushing toward me with phrases of disgusting cordiality, when I heard the horrible din of their chains, their clamors, their steps at the foot of my wall, it seemed to me that this knot of demons were scaling my cell! I uttered a shriek; I threw myself against the door violently; but there was no means of

flight. I knocked, I called with mad fury. Then I thought I heard, still nearer, the horrid voices of the convicts. I thought I saw their hideous heads, appearing on a level with the window ; I uttered another shriek of anguish, and fainted.

XIV.

When my consciousness returned, it was night: I was lying on a pallet; a lamp which swung from the ceiling, enabled me to see a line of beds similar to mine, and I therefore judged that I had been taken to the infirmary.

I remained a few moments awake, but without thought or recollection, totally engrossed by the happiness of being again in a bed. Certainly, in former days, this prison-hospital bed would have made me shrink with disgust; but I am no longer the same individual. The sheets were brown, and coarse to the touch; the blanket thin and ragged; and there was but one straw mattress. No matter! I could stretch my limbs at their ease, between these coarse sheets; and under this blanket, thin as it was, I felt the gradual decrease of that horrible chill in the marrow of my bones, to which I had lately been accustomed.—I slept again.

A loud noise awakened me, at daylight; the noise came from without; my bed was beside the window, and I sat up to see from what it arose.

The window looked into the large court of the Bicêtre, which was full of people. Two lines of veterans had difficulty in keeping the crowd away from a narrow passage across the court. Between this double rank of soldiers, five long wagons, loaded with men, were driven slowly, jolting at each stone; it was the departure of the convicts.

These wagons were open, and each gang occupied one. The convicts, in consequence of their iron collars being attached to the centre chain, are obliged to sit back to back, their feet hanging over the sides of the wagon; the centre chain stretched the whole length of the cart, and on its unfastened end, the warder stood with his loaded musket. There was a continual clanking of the prisoners' chains, and at each plunge of the wagon their heads and pendent limbs were jolted violently.

A fine penetrating rain chilled the air, and made their wet pantaloons cling to their shivering knees. Their long beards and short hair streamed with wet; their complexions were saturnine; they were shivering, and grinding their teeth with mingled rage and cold! But they had no power of moving: once riveted to that chain, each becomes a mere fraction of that hideous whole which is called the *cordon* (literally string, freely the gang). Intellect must abdicate, the fetters

condemn it to death, and the mere animal must not even hunger but at certain hours. Thus fixed, the greater part half clad, with bare heads, and no rest for their feet, they begin their journey of twenty-five days; the same sort of wagons, the same portion of dress being used in scorching July as in the cold rains of November. One might say that man wished Heaven to take a part of office of executioner.

Between the crowd and the convicts, a horrible dialogue was maintained: abuse on one side, bravadoes on the other, imprecations from both; but at a sign from the captain, I saw the sticks of the guard, raining indiscriminate blows into the wagon, on heads or shoulders; and all returned to that kind of external calm which is called *order*. But their eyes were full of vengeance; and their powerless hands were clenched on their knees.

The five wagons, escorted by mounted gendarmes and guards on foot, passed slowly under the high arched door of Bicêtre. A sixth followed them, in which were heaped pell-mell the cooking stoves, the copper pots and the extra chains. Some of the warders who had been delayed in the canteen came running out to join their squad. The crowd followed them: all vanished like a phantasmagoria, and by degrees the sounds of the heavy

wheels on the Fontainebleau road diminished, clanking fetters, and the yells of the multitude uttering maledictions on the journey of the convicts.

And that was their beginning!

What a proposition my counsel made! The galleys! Ah! yes, rather a thousand times death, rather the scaffold than the galley, rather the end than hell; rather give up my neck to the knife of the guillotine than to the pillory of the convict gang! The galleys, good heavens!

XV.

Unfortunately I was not ill. The next day I was obliged to leave the infirmary. My dungeon again received me.

Not ill! indeed, I am young, healthful, and strong; the blood flows freely in my veins; my limbs obey my will; I am robust in mind and body, constituted for a long life. Yes, all this is true; and yet, nevertheless, I have an illness, a fatal illness, an illness given by the hand of man!

Since I came out of the infirmary, a vivid idea has occupied me; a thought which affects me to madness; it is, that I might have escaped, had they left me there! Those physicians, those sisters of charity seemed to take an interest in me. "To die so young! and by such a death!" One would have imagined they pitied me by their pressing round my bed. Bah! it was curiosity! and then, these people may very well cure one of a fever but not of a sentence of death. And it would be so easy for them! only an open door! What difference would it make to them?

I have no chance now! My plea will be rejected, because all was legal; the witnesses gave correct evidence, the counsel pleaded well, the judges decided carefully. I do not reckon upon it, unless . . . No, folly! there is no hope. The plea is a cord which holds you suspended over an abyss, and which you feel giving way at each instant until it breaks! It is as if the axe of the guillotine took six weeks to fall.

If I could obtain my pardon!—my pardon! From whom? for what? and by what means? It is impossible that I should be pardoned. An example as they say!

I have only three steps to make: Bicêtre, the Conciergerie, the Place de la Grève.

XVI.

During the few hours I passed at the infirmary, I seated myself at a window in the sunshine, for the afternoon had become fine, and I enjoyed all the sun which the gratings of the window would allow me.

I sat thus, my heavy and fevered head within my hands, my elbows on my knees, my feet on the bar of the chair ; for dejection had made me stoop, and sink within myself, as if I had neither bone nor muscular power.

The stifling odor of the prison oppressed me more than ever ; I still fancied the noise from the convicts' chains rung in my ears ; I was almost overcome with disgust for Bicêtre. It seemed to me that the good God should take pity on me, and at least send a little bird to sing there, opposite, on the edge of the roof.

I know not if it was the good God or a demon which granted my wish ; but almost at the moment I uttered it, I heard beneath my window a voice,—not that of a bird, but far better ; the pure, fresh, velvet voice of a young girl of fifteen !

I raised my head with a start; I listened with avidity to the song she sung. It was a slow and plaintive air, a sad yet beautiful melody; here are the words:

C'est dans la rue du Mail,
Ou j'ai été coltigé,
Maluré,
Par trois coquins du railles,
Lirlonfa malurette,
Sur mes sique' ont foncé,
Lirlonfa maluré.

I cannot say how bitter was my disappointment. The voice continued :

Sur mes sique' ont foncé,
Lirlonfa maluré,
Ils m'ont mis la tartouve,
Lirlonfa malurette,
Grand Meudon est aboulé,
Lirlonfa maluré.
Dans mon trimin rencontre,
Lirlonfa malurette,
Un peigre du quartier,
Lirlonfa maluré.

Un peigre du quartier,
Maluré.
—Va-t'en dire à ma largue,
Lirlonfa malurette,
Que je suis enfourraillé,
Lirlonfa maluré.

Ma largue tout en colère,
 Lirlonfa malurette,
 M'dit : Qu 'as-tu donc morfillé ?
 Lirlonfa maluré.

M'dit : Qu 'as-tu donc morfillé ?
 Maluré.
 —J'ai fait suer un chêne,
 Lirlonfa malurette,
 Son auberg j'ai enganté,
 Lirlonfa maluré,
 Son auberg et sa toquante,
 Lirlonfa malurette,
 Et ses attach's de cés,
 Lirlonfa maluré.

Et ses attach's de cés,
 Maluré.
 Ma largu' part pour Versailles,
 Lirlonfa malurette,
 Aux pieds d'sa majesté,
 Lirlonfa maluré,
 Elle lui fonce un babillard,
 Lirlonfa malurette,
 Pour m'fair' defourrailler,
 Lirlonfa maluré.

Pour m'faire defourrailler,
 Maluré.
 —Ah ! si j'en défourraille,
 Lirlonfa malurette,
 Ma largue j'entiferai,
 Lirlonfa maluré,

J'li ferai porter fontange,
Lirlonfa malurette,
Et souliers galuchés,
Lirlonfa maluré.

Et souliers galuchés,
Maluré.
Mais grand dabe qui s'fâche,
Lirlonfa malurette,
Dit :—Par mon caloquet,
Lirlonfa maluré,
J'li ferai danser une danse,
Lirlonfa malurette,
Où il n'y a pas de plancher,
Lirlonfa maluré.⁵—

I heard no more and would not have been able to listen any longer. The meaning, half understood and half hidden, of this horrible lament; this struggle of the brigand with the watch, this robber whom he meets and sends for his wife,—this dreadful message, *J'ai fait suer un chêne et ce suis enfourraillé*;⁶ the wife who goes to Versailles with a petition, and this *Majesté* who indignantly exclaims that he will make the guilty man dance, *la danse où il n'y a pas de plancher*;⁷—and all this sung to the sweetest air, and by the sweetest voice that ever soothed human ear! I was shocked, disgusted, overcome. It was a repulsive idea, that all these monstrous

words proceeded from a fresh rosy mouth: it was like the slime of a snail over a rosebud.

I cannot express what I felt; I was at once pained and gratified; the idiom of crime, a language at once sanguinary and grotesque,—united to the voice of a young girl, that graceful transition, from the voice of childhood to the voice of woman. All these deformities of words, delightfully sung, cadenced, rounded!

Ah! what infamous thing is a prison! It contains a venom which assails all within its pestilential reach. Everything withers there, even the song of a girl of fifteen! If you find a bird within its courts, it has mud on its wing. If you gather a beauteous flower there, it exhales poison!

XVII.

Oh, if I could only escape, how I would fly across the fields!

No, I must not run—that would draw attention and make people suspicious. On the contrary; I must walk slowly, with my head up, humming a tune. I ought to have an old handkerchief round the lower part of my face, a blue one with a pattern in red on it. It is a capital disguise, all the market-gardeners in the suburbs wear them.

I know of a little clump of trees near Arcueil, by the side of a marsh. Once when I was at school I came there with my playmates to fish for frogs; I would hide myself there until night.

As it grew dark, I recommenced my journey. I would go to Vincennes. No, the river is in the way, I will go to Arpajon. Perhaps it would be better to go by Saint-Germain, and go to Hâvre, there I could embark for England. No matter! I come to Longjumeau. A policeman passes me; he asks for my passport . . . I am lost!

Ah! hapless dreamer, first break through
the three-foot wall that surrounds you!
Death! Death!

I recollect when I was quite a child they
brought me to Bicêtre to see the great wall,
and the mad people!

XVIII.

Whilst I was writing this my lamp faded, daylight appeared, and the clock of the chapel struck six.

What can be the meaning of what has since happened? The jailer on duty came into my cell; he took off his cap, bowed to me, apologized for disturbing me, and making an effort to soften his rough voice, inquired what I wished to have for my breakfast.

A shudder has come over me;—Is it to take place to-day?

XIX.

It is for to-day !

The governor of the prison himself came to visit me. He asked me how he could serve or accommodate me ; he expressed a hope that I had no complaint to make respecting him, or his subordinates ; and he inquired with interest regarding my health, and how I had passed the night. On leaving, he called me *Sir* !

It is for to-day !

XX.

The jailer thinks I have no cause of complaint against him or his subordinates. He is right, and it would be wrong of me to complain; they have done their duty, they have kept me safe; and then they have been complaisant at my arrival and departure. Ought I not to be satisfied?

This good jailer, with his benign smile, his soft words, his eye, which flatters and spies, his coarse heavy hands, is the incarnation of a prison! He is Bicêtre in the form of a man. Everything around me reminds me of a prison; I recognize it in everything, in the human figure, as in the iron bars and bolts: this wall is a prison in stone, this door a prison in wood, these turnkeys are prisoners in flesh and bone. The prison is a kind of horrible being complete and indivisible, half building and half man. I am its victim; it grasps me, it wraps me in its folds, it shuts me up in its granite walls, it padlocks me with its

iron bolts, and it watches me through the eyes of its jailers.

Ah! unhappy wretch that I am, what is to become of me, what are they going to do with me?

XXI.

Now I am calm. All is finished, quite finished! I am relieved from the dreadful anxiety into which I was thrown by the director's visit. For I confess I still felt hope. Now, thank God! Hope is gone.

This is what has happened :

At half-past six, no, a quarter to seven, the door of my cell was opened : an old man with white hair entered, dressed in a brown great coat. He unfastened it, and beneath I saw a black cassock and bands. It was a priest.

He was not the usual chaplain to the prison. This was ominous.

He seated himself opposite to me, with a quiet smile; then shook his head, and raised his eyes to heaven. That is to say to the vault of my cell. I understood him.

"My son," said he, "are you prepared?"

I answered, in a low tone :

"I am not prepared, but I am ready."

Then my sight became troubled ; a chill damp pervaded my frame. I felt the veins on my temples swelling, and a confused murmur in my ears. Whilst I wavered on my chair as though

asleep, the old man continued speaking. At least, so it appeared to me, for I think I remember seeing his lips move, and his hand raised.

The door was opened again; the noise of the lock roused me from my reverie, and the priest from his discourse. A person dressed in black entered, accompanied by the director of the prison, and bowed profoundly to me: he carried a roll of paper in his hand.

"Sir," said he, with a courteous smile, "I am an usher of the royal court at Paris. I have the honor to bring you a message from the prosecutor-general."

The first agitation was over; all my presence of mind returned.

"The prosecutor-general," said I, "asks for my head at once? What an honor for him to write to me, I hope that my death will give him great pleasure, for he worked too hard for it not to be a matter of indifference to him."

I said all that, and then continued in a firm voice: "Read on, sir."

He then read in a sing-song voice, a long, technically-expressed paper, the purport of which was the rejection of my plea.

"The execution of the sentence will be to-day, in the Place de Grève," added he, when he had finished reading, without raising his eyes from the paper. "We shall leave for the Conciergerie at half-past seven precisely. My dear

sir, will you have the extreme goodness to accompany me?"

For some instants I had no longer heard him; for while his eyes were fixed on the paper, the director was occupied talking to the priest: and I looked at the door which they had left half open! . . . Ah! hapless me! Four sentinels in the corridor.

The usher repeated the question, looking at me this time.

"When you please," I said, "at your convenience."

He bowed and said:

"I shall have the honor of coming for you, then, in half an hour."

Then they left me alone.

Oh! for some means of escape. My God! any means whatever! I must make my escape! I must! immediately! By the doors, by the windows, by the roof! Even though I leave shreds of my flesh on the rafters.

Oh! rage! demons! malediction! It would take months to pierce this wall with efficient tools. And I have not one nail, nor one hour!

XXII.

IN THE CONCIERGERIE.

Here I am *transferred*, then, as they say in the order.

But the journey is worth being recorded.

At half-past seven, the usher again presented himself at the threshold of my dungeon. "Sir," said he, "I wait for you." Alas! and I saw four others with him! I rose, and advanced one step. It appeared to me I could not make a second. My head was so heavy, and my limbs so feeble: but I made an effort to conquer my weakness, and assumed an appearance of firmness. Prior to leaving the cell, I gave it a final look; I had almost become attached to it. Besides, I left it empty and open, which gives so strange an appearance to a dungeon.

However, it will not be long untenanted. The turnkeys said they expected some one this evening, a prisoner who was then being tried at the court of assizes.

At the turn of the corridor, the chaplain rejoined us; he had just breakfasted.

At the threshold of the jail, the director took me kindly by the hand,—he had reinforced my escort by four veterans.

By the door of the infirmary a dying old man exclaimed, "Until we meet again!"

We arrived in the court-yard, where I could breathe again freely, and this refreshed me greatly.

We did not walk long in the open air. A carriage was stationed in the first court. It was the same which had brought me there. A sort of oblong van, divided into two sections by a transverse grating of close wire. Each of the two sections had a door; one in the front, one in the back of the cart. The whole so dirty, so black, so dusty, that the hearse for paupers is a state carriage by comparison.

Before I buried myself in this moving tomb, I cast a look round the yard,—one of those despairing looks which seem to ask a miracle. The court was already encumbered with spectators.

Like the day when the convicts departed, there was a slight, chilling shower of the season; it is raining still, and doubtless there will be rain all the day,—which will last when I am no more!

The roads were frightful, the court was drenched. I had the pleasure of seeing the crowd standing in the mud!

We entered the van. The messenger and a gendarme in the front compartment, the priest, myself, and a gendarme, in the other, with four mounted gendarmes around the carriage. Thus, not counting the postilion, there were eight against one.

As I entered it, an old gray-eyed woman who stood near exclaimed, "I like seeing this, even better than seeing the galley-convicts!"

I can conceive this. It is a spectacle more easily taken in at one view. Nothing divides the attention; there is but one man, and on this isolated being there is as much misery heaped as on all the other convicts together.

The van passed with a dull noise under the gateway, and the heavy doors of the Bicêtre were closed after us. I felt myself moving, but in stupor, like a man fallen into a lethargy, who can neither move nor cry out, and who fancies he feels that he is being buried alive. I listened vaguely to the peal of bells on the collars of the post-horses which drew the van, the iron wheels grating over various substances in the road, the clacking whips of the postilion, the galloping of the gendarmes round the carriage: all seemed like a whirlwind which bore me away.

Through the bars of a peep-hole in front of me my eyes were fixed mechanically on an inscription carved in large letters above

the main door to Bicêtre: HOSPICE DE LA FIEILLESSE.

"Ha," said I to myself, "it seems that there are some people who grow there," and, as my mind was so stupefied with grief, I only conceived ideas as in a dream. Suddenly the van changed its course and I saw the towers of Nôtre-Dame in the distance, blue and half hidden in the smoke of Paris.

At once my ideas changed from Bicêtre to Nôtre-Dame. "Those who will be on the tower with the flag will see my execution well," said I to myself smiling stupidly.

I think it was at that moment that the priest addressed me again; I patiently let him speak; I had already in my ears the noise of the wheels, the galloping horses, and the postilion's whip; therefore it was only one more incomprehensible noise.

I listened in silence to that flow of monotonous words, which deadened my thoughts like the murmur of a brook; and they passed before my torpid mind, always varied yet always the same, like the crooked elms we passed by the roadside. The short and jerking voice of the messenger in the front of the van suddenly aroused me.

"Well, Monsieur l'Abbé," said he, in almost a gay tone, "what news have you to-day?"

It was to the chaplain that he turned and spoke thus.

The chaplain, who talked to me without ceasing, and who was deafened by the carriage, made no answer.

“Hé, hé!” resumed the usher, raising his voice to drown the sound of the wheels, “what an infernal carriage this is!”

Infernal, indeed, for I found it so.

He continued:

“It is the jolting and the rumbling, no doubt, that prevents your hearing me—what was I saying? Ah! your reverence, have you heard to-day’s news that is exciting all Paris?”

I trembled; was he speaking of me?

“No,” answered the priest, who had at last heard him, “I have not had time to read the morning papers; but I suppose I shall see it all in the evening. When I am much engaged, I tell our porter to keep them for me, and I read them on my return.”

“Bah!” replied the usher, “it is impossible that you have not heard what I mean. The news of Paris—the news of this morning.”

I interrupted him:

“I believe I know.”

The usher looked at me.

“You? really! and, pray what is your opinion about it?”

"You are inquisitive," said I.

"How so, sir?" replied he. "Every one should have a political opinion: I esteem you too much to suppose that you are without one. As to myself, I am quite in favor of re-establishing the National Guard. I was a sergeant in my company; and, faith! it was very agreeable to . . ."

I interrupted him.

"I did not think this was the subject in question."

"What did you suppose, then? You said you knew the news."

"I spoke of something else with which Paris is also occupied to-day."

The fool did not understand, his curiosity was awakened.

"More news! Where the deuce could *you* learn news? What is it, my dear sir? Do you know what it is, Monsieur l'Abbé? Do let me hear all about it, I beg. I like news, you see, to relate to the president; it amuses him."

And so on. He turned to the priest, and then to me, and I only answered by shrugging my shoulders.

"Well," said he, "what are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking," said I, "that I shall be past thinking this evening."

"Oh, that's it," returned he. "Come, come, you are too sad. Mr. Castaing conversed on the day of his execution."

Then, after a pause:

"I accompanied Mr. Papavoine on his last day. He wore his otter-skin cap, and smoked his cigar. As for the young men of la Rochelle, they only spoke among themselves, but still they spoke."

Another pause, and then he continued:

"Fools! Enthusiasts! they seemed to scorn the whole world. As for you, I really think you are too pensive, young man."

"Young man?" I repeated. "I am older than you; every quarter of an hour which passes makes me a year older."

He turned round, looked at me some minutes with stupid astonishment, and then began to titter.

"Come, you are joking; older than I am? why I might be your grandfather."

"I have no wish to jest," I answered gravely.

He opened his snuff-box.

"Here, my good sir, don't be angry. Take a pinch of snuff, and don't bear malice."

"Do not fear," said I, "I shall not have long to bear it against you."

At this moment the snuff-box which he extended to me came against the grating which

separated us. A jolt caused it to strike rather violently, and it fell, wide open, under the feet of the gendarme.

"Cursed grating!" cried the usher.

Then, turning to me, he added:

"Now, am I not unlucky? I have lost all my snuff!"

"I lose more than you," said I, smiling.

He had tried to pick up his snuff, muttering between his teeth:

"More than I! that's very easily said. No more snuff until I reach Paris! it's terrible."

The chaplain then addressed him with some words of consolation; and I know not if I were pre-occupied, but it seemed to me to be part of the exhortation of which the commencement had been addressed to me. By degrees conversation increased between the chaplain and the officer; and I became again lost in thought.

We approached the barrier, and although I was still very pre-occupied, I noticed that Paris was noisier than usual.

The van was stopped for a minute before the toll-gate, and the inspector examined it. Had it contained a sheep or an ox, which was going to be slaughtered, they would have required some money; but a human head pays no duty! We passed.

Crossing the boulevard, the carriage trotted quickly through those old and crooked streets of the Faubourg Saint-Marceau and of the Cité, which twist and cross each other like the many paths of an ant-hill. On the pavement of these narrow streets the rolling of the wheels became so noisy and rapid, that I could hear no other sound, though I saw that people exclaimed, as the van passed, and bands of children followed its track. I fancied also I occasionally saw in the cross-streets ragged men displaying in their hands a bundle of printed papers, their mouths open as if vociferating something, while the passers stopped to purchase.

The clock of the Palais struck half-past eight as we arrived in the court of the Conciergerie. The sight of its wide staircase, its dark chapel, its sombre gates, made me shudder; and when the carriage stopped, I fancied the beatings of my heart stopped also.

But I collected my strength; the door was opened; with the rapidity of lightning I jumped from the moving prison, and passed between two lines of soldiers: already there was a crowd formed on my path.

XXIII.

As I walked through the public galleries of the Palais de Justice I felt almost free and at ease, but all my resolution abandoned me when I reached the low doors, private stairs, and interior corridors, which are only entered by the condemned.

The usher still accompanied me: the priest had left me for a couple of hours; he had some business to attend to.

I was then taken to the director, into whose charge the usher gave me. They made an exchange. The director told him to wait a moment, as he had some *game* for him to take back in the van to the Bicêtre. No doubt it was the man condemned to-day. He is to sleep to-night on the bundle of straw which I have not had time to wear out.

"Oh! very well," said the usher to the director, "I will wait with pleasure; we can make out the two papers together, and it will be very convenient."

They then placed me in a small room, adjoining the director's office; and left me alone, well locked up.

I know not of what I was thinking, or how long I had been there, when a sudden and loud burst of laughter in my ear, dispersed my reverie.

I raised my eyes with a start. I was no longer alone in the cell; a man was beside me. He was about fifty-five years old, middle-sized, wrinkled, stooping and bald: with a sinister cast in his gray eyes, and a bitter sneer on his countenance; he was dirty, half-clothed, ragged, disgusting.

It seemed that the door had been opened, and he had been thrust in without my having perceived it. If death would only come thus.

We looked at each other steadfastly for some moments; he prolonging his bitter laugh, while I felt half astonished, half alarmed.

"Who are you?" said I, to him at last.

"That is a funny question," said he. "I am a *friauche*."

"A *friauche*?" said I, "what do you mean?"

This question redoubled his merriment.

"Why," cried he, in the midst of a shout of laughter, "it means that the knife will play with my head in a basket six weeks hence, as it will with thine in six hours! Ha! ha! thou seemst to understand now!"

Indeed I was pale, and my hair stood on end. This then was the other condemned

prisoner, the one just sentenced, whom they expected at the Bicêtre; the heir of my cell.

He continued, "Never mind! Here's my history. I am son of a famous thief; it is a pity that Charlot (the hangman) took the trouble one day to tighten his cravat. That was during the reign of the gallows by the grace of God. At six years of age I had neither father nor mother; in summer I turned somersaults in the dust on the high-road, that carriage-travelers might throw me money; in winter I walked with naked feet in the mud, in ragged clothes, and blowing on my purple hands to excite pity; you could see my legs through my pantaloons. At nine years old I began to use my *louches* (soup ladles, hands); from time to time I emptied a *fouillouse* (a pocket); I stole a *pelure* (a mantle); at ten years old I was a *marlou* (a sharper); then I made acquaintances, and at seventeen I became a *grinche* (a robber). I broke into a *boutanche* (a shop), I forced the *tournante* (a lock); I was taken and sent to row in the little ship (the galleys). What a hard life that was! Sleeping on bare boards, drinking plain water, eating black bread, dragging a stupid fetter which was of no use; sun-strokes and whip-strokes: and then all the heads are kept shaved, and I had such fine chestnut hair!

Never mind! I served my time; fifteen years. That wears one famously!

"I was two-and-thirty years old; one fine morning they gave me a map of the road, a passport, and sixty-six francs which I had amassed in my fifteen years at the galleys, working sixteen hours a day, thirty days a month, twelve months a year. All the same, I wished to be an honest man with my sixty-six francs; and I had finer sentiments under my rags than you might find beneath the cassock of a *ratichon* (priest). But, deuce take the passport! It was yellow, and they had written upon it 'Freed convict.' I was obliged to show this at every village, and to present it every week to the mayors of the towns in which I was ordered to *tapiquer* (lodge). A fine recommendation! a galley-convict! I frightened all the folk, and little children ran away, and people locked their doors. No one would give me work; I expended the last of my sixty-six francs. And then one must live. I showed my arms, fit for labor, the people shut their doors. I offered my day's work for fifteen sous, for ten sous, for five sous! and no one would have me. What could be done? One day, being hungry, I knocked my elbow through a baker's window;—I seized on a loaf, and the baker seized on me;—I did not eat the loaf, yet I was condemned to the galleys

for life, with three letters branded on my shoulder;—I'll show them to you if you like. They call that sort of justice *the relapse*. So here I was, a *cheval de retour* (return horse—sent back to the galleys). I was brought back to Toulon: this time put among the *bonnets verts* (Green caps—condemned for life), so now I decided to escape. I had *only* three walls to pierce, two chains to break, and I had one nail! I escaped. They fired the signal gun, for we convicts are like the cardinals of Rome, dressed in red, and they fire cannons when we depart! Their powder went to the sparrows! This time, no yellow passport, but then no money either. I met some comrades in the neighborhood who had also served their time, or broken their chains. Their *coire* (chief) proposed to me to join the band. They killed on the *trimar* (highway). I accepted, and I began to kill, so as to live. Sometimes we attacked a diligence, sometimes it was a post-chaise, sometimes a grazier on horseback. We took the money, we let the horses go, and buried the bodies under a tree, taking care that their feet did not appear; and then we danced on the graves, so that the ground might not seem fresh broken. I grew old this way, hiding in the bushes, sleeping in the air, hunted from wood to wood, but at least free and my own master. Everything

has an end, and this like the rest; the *marchands de lacets* (gendarmes) one night caught us at our tricks: my *fanandels* (comrades) escaped; but I, the oldest, remained under the claw of these cats in cocked hats. They brought me here. I had already mounted all the steps of the ladder, except one. Whether I had now taken a handkerchief or a life, was all the same for me. There was but one relapse to give me. I only had to pass the *faucher* (executioner). My business has been short: faith, I began to grow old and good for nothing. My father had married *la veuve*, (the gibbet—been hanged.) I am going to retire to the *Abbay de Monte-à-Regret* (the guillotine): that's all, comrade!"

I remained stupefied during the recital. He laughed louder than at the beginning, and tried to take my hand. I drew back in horror.

"Friend," cried he, "you don't seem game. Don't flinch on the *carline* (scaffold). See, there is one bad moment to pass on the *placarde* (the Place de Grève), but that's so soon done. I should like to be there to show you the step! Faith, I've a great mind not to plead, if they will finish me with you to-day. The same priest will serve us both. You see I'm a good fellow, eh? I say, shall we be friends?"

Again he advanced a step nearer to me.

"Sir," I answered, repulsing him, "I thank you."

Fresh bursts of laughter at my answer.

"Ah! ha! sir, you must be a marquis! A marquis, at least!"

I interrupted him:

"My friend, I require reflection: leave me in peace."

The gravity of my tone rendered him instantly thoughtful. He shook his gray and nearly bald head.

"I understand now," he murmured between his teeth—"the *sanglier*! (the priest.)"

After a few minutes' silence, he said to me, almost timidly: "Sir, you are a marquis; that is all very well;—but you have on such a nice great coat, which will not be of much use to you. The executioner will take it. Give it to me, and I will sell it for tobacco."

I took off my great coat and gave it to him. He began to clap his hands with childish joy; then looking at my shirt sleeves, and seeing that I shivered:

"You are cold, sir; put on this; it rains, and you will be wet through: besides you ought to go decently on the wagon!"

While saying this, he took off his coarse gray woolen jacket, and put my arms into it, which I allowed him to do unconsciously.

Then I leaned against the wall, and I cannot describe the effect this man had on me. He was examining the coat which I had given him, and uttered each moment an exclamation of delight.

“The pockets are quite new! The collar is not in the least worn! It will bring me at least fifteen francs. What luck! I shall have tobacco during all my six weeks.”

The door opened again. They had come for both of us; to conduct me to the room where the condemned finally await their execution: and to lead him away to Bicêtre. He placed himself, laughingly, amongst them, and said to the gendarmes:

“I say! don’t make a mistake; we have changed skins, the gentleman and I; but don’t take me in his place. The devil! That wouldn’t suit me at all, now that I can have tobacco!”

XXIV.

That old scoundrel ! he took my great coat from me, for I did not give it to him ; and then he left me this rag, his odious jacket. For whom shall I be taken ?

It was not from indifference, or from charity, that I let him take it. No : but because he was stronger than I ! If I had refused, he would have beaten me with those great hands. Ah ! indeed, charity, I was full of bad feeling.

I should like to have strangled him with my own hands, the old thief ! To have trampled him under my feet.

I feel my heart full of rage and bitterness : and my nature turned to gall. Death renders one wicked.

XXV.

They led me into a cell furnished with nothing but four walls, with plenty of bars to the window and many bolts on the door; all of which was to be expected.

I asked for a table, a chair and writing materials. They brought me all these.

Then I asked for a bed. The turnkey eyed me with astonishment, and seemed mentally to say: "What will be the use of it?"

However they made up a chaff bed in a corner. But at the same time a gendarme came to install himself in what was called *my room*. Are they afraid that I will strangle myself with the mattress?

XXVI.

It is ten o'clock.

Oh! my poor little girl. Six hours more, and I will be dead. I will be some senseless thing to be stretched out on a cold table in an amphitheatre; a head to be cast by one party, a trunk to be dissected by another: then all to be thrown together into a bier, and dispatched to Clamart.

This is what they are going to do with your father; by men, none of whom hate me; who all pity me, and all of whom could save me! They are going to kill me. Do you understand that, Marie? To kill me in cold blood; a ceremonial for the general good. Ah! good God!

Poor little girl! your father, who loved you so well, your father who kissed your little white neck, who passed his hands so fondly through the ringlets of your silken hair; who danced you on his knee, and every evening joined your two little hands to pray to God!

Who will do all this for you in future? Who now will love you? All children of your age have fathers, except you. How will you become accustomed to do without New

Years, presents, pretty toys, bonbons and kisses. How will you, unfortunate orphan, do without food and drink?

Oh! if the jury had only seen you, my pretty little Marie, they would have understood it was wrong to kill the father of a child three years old.

And when she grows up, what will become of her? Her father will be one of the by-words of the people of Paris. She will blush for me and my name; she will be despised, rejected, reviled, on account of him who loved her with all the tenderness of his heart. Oh! my little beloved Marie. Can it be true that you will have shame and horror of me?

Wretch! what crime have I committed, and what crime will I commit against society!

Oh! can it be true that I am to die before the close of day? Can it really be that this is me? Those distant shouts which I hear, that mass of animated spectators who are already hastening to the quays, those gendarmes preparing in their barracks, this priest in the black robe, this other man with the red hands! Is it all for me? Is it I who am going to die? This same self which is here, which lives, moves, breathes, which is seated at this table, this self which I touch and can feel, and whose clothing hangs in folds here!

XXVII.

If I only knew how it is built, and in what way one dies upon it;—but it is horrible, I do not know this. The very name of it is frightful, and I cannot understand how I have hitherto been able to write and utter it.

The combination of these ten letters, their aspect, their appearance are well calculated to awaken a frightful idea, and the unlucky doctor who invented the thing had a name predestined for it.

The idea I attach to this hateful name is vague, undefined, and therefore more sinister. I construct and demolish in my mind continually its hideous scaffolding.

I dare not ask a question about it, yet it is dreadful not to know what it is, and how to behave upon it. It seems there is a sort of see-saw, and that you are laid on your stomach—ah! my hair will be white before my head falls!

XXVIII.

I had a glimpse of it once.

I was crossing the Place de Grève in a carriage, about eleven o'clock one morning. Suddenly the carriage stopped. There was a crowd in the square. I looked out of the window: a dense throng of men, women and children filled the square and the neighboring streets. Above the crowd, I saw a kind of frame of red wood, which three men were building.

A criminal was to be executed the same day, and they were building the machine.

I turned away my head before seeing it. Close to the carriage there was a woman who said to a child,—

“Now, look! the axe slides badly: they are going to grease the slide with a candle-end.”

They are probably doing the same to-day. Eleven o'clock has just struck. No doubt they are greasing the slide.

Oh! unhappy creature, this time I shall not turn away my head.

XXIX.

Oh ! for a pardon ! my reprieve ! perhaps I shall be pardoned. The king has no dislike to me. Let some one seek my lawyer ! Quick, the lawyer ! He was right, and I should prefer the galleys. Five years of the galleys,—or twenty years,—or even the galleys for life, branded with the red-hot iron. But give me my life !

A galley-slave can move, come and go, and see the sunshine.

XXX.

The priest has returned.

He has white hair, a very gentle look, a good and respectable countenance, and is indeed an excellent and charitable man. This morning I saw him empty his purse into the hands of the prisoners. How comes it then that his voice causes no emotion, and he does not ever seem affected by his own theme? How is it that he has as yet said nothing which has won on my intellect or my heart?

This morning, I was bewildered. I scarcely heard what he said; his words seemed to me useless, and I remained indifferent: they glided away like those drops of rain off the window-panes of my cell.

Nevertheless, when he came just now to my room, his appearance did me good. Amongst all mankind he is the only one to whom I am still a man, said I to myself. And I felt an ardent thirst for good and consoling words.

When we were seated, he on the chair, and I on the bed, he said to me, "My son,—"
This word opened my heart. He continued:

"My son, do you believe in God?"

"Yes, father," I answered him.

"Do you believe in the holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church?"

"Willingly," said I.

"My son," returned he, "you have an air of doubt."

Then he began to speak; he spoke a long time; he uttered a quantity of words; then when he had finished, he rose, and looked at me for the first time since the beginning of his discourse, and said:

"Well?"

I declare I had listened to him with avidity at first, then with attention, then with devotion.

I rose, and said:

"Sir, leave me for a time, I beg of you."

He asked me:

"When shall I return?"

"I will let you know."

Then he withdrew in silence, but shaking his head as though inwardly exclaiming:

"An unbeliever."

No! low as I have fallen, I am not an unbeliever. God is my witness, that I believe in Him. But how did that old man address me? Nothing to be felt, nothing to affect me, nothing to draw forth tears, nothing which sprung from his heart to enter into mine—nothing which was addressed from

himself to myself. On the contrary, there was something vague, inaccentuated, applicable to any case, and to none in particular: emphatic, where it should have been profound, flat where it ought to have been simple; a species of sentimental sermon, and theological elegy. Now and then a quotation in Latin; here and there, the names of Saint Augustine, and Saint Gregory, and others of the calendar. And throughout he had the air of reciting a lesson which he had already twenty times repeated; seeming to go over a theme almost obliterated in his memory from being so long known. Not a look in his eyes, not an accent in his voice, not a gesture of his hands.

And how could it be otherwise? This priest has the title of chaplain of the prison; his business is to console and exhort; and he lives by that. Condemned felons are the spring of his eloquence. He receives their confession and prays with them—because it is his place to do so. He has advanced in years in conducting men to death: from his youth, he has grown accustomed to that which makes others shudder. The dungeon and scaffold are every-day matters with him. He is *blasé*. Probably he has a diary; one page for the galley-slaves, another for the condemned to death. He receives notice the preceding

evening that he will have to attend some one the following day, at a certain hour : he asks, "Is it for the galleys or an execution ?" and he asks no more respecting them, but comes next day as a matter of course. In this way it happens that those who go to Toulon and those who go to the Grève, are nothing to him, as he is nothing to them.

Oh ! that they would bring me, instead of this man, some young curate, some aged priest, taken by chance from the nearest parish. Let them find him at his fireside, reading, and, without warning, say to him : "There is a man who is going to die, and it is reserved for you to console him. You must be there when they bind his hands ; you must take a place in the fatal cart, with your crucifix, and conceal the executioner from him ; you must be jolted with him over the paving to the Grève ; you must pass with him through that horrible crowd which is thirsting for blood ; you must embrace him at the foot of the scaffold, and you must remain there until his head is here and the body there !"

Then, when they have said this, let them bring him hither, agitated, palpitating, all shuddering from head to foot. Let me throw myself into his arms ; then kneel at his feet, and he will weep, and we will weep together, and he will be eloquent, and I shall be

consoled, and my heart will unburthen itself into his heart, and I will accept his God.

I am perhaps wrong to repulse him thus ; since he is good and I am bad. Alas ! it is not my fault. It is the brand of death which destroys and corrupts everything.

They have just brought me food : as though I should have need of it. A meal delicate, appetizing, a chicken, it seems, and something else. Well ! I have tried to eat ; but, at the first bite, everything fell from my mouth, so bitter and fetid did it seem.

XXXI.

A gentleman has just entered, his hat on his head, who, hardly noticing me, took out his foot-rule and measured the stones of the walls, meantime speaking to himself aloud, sometimes saying "that is it," and sometimes "that is not it."

I asked the gendarme who he was. It seems that he is a sort of under-architect employed in the prison. His curiosity has awakened a slight interest in me; he exchanged a few words aside with the turnkeys who accompanied him; then fixed his eyes on me for an instant, gave his head a careless toss, and again began to speak in a loud voice and to continue taking measurements.

His task finished, he came over to me, saying, in his noisy way:

"My good fellow, in six months this prison will be much improved."

And his look seemed to add:

"And you will not enjoy it; so much the worse." He almost smiled. I almost expected him to jeer good-naturedly, as one jokes with a young wife on a wedding night.

My keeper, an old soldier who wears chevrons, undertook to reply:

"Sir," said he, "one does not speak so loudly in a death chamber."

The architect then went out.

I—I remained there like one of the stones which he had been measuring.

XXXII.

And then a ridiculous thing happened.

They came to relieve my good old gendarme, with whom, ungrateful egotist that I am, I did not even shake hands. Another took his place; a man with a low forehead, heavy features, and stupid countenance.

Beyond this I paid no attention, but seated myself at the table, my forehead resting on my hands, and my mind troubled by thought.

A light touch on my shoulder made me look round. It was the new gendarme, with whom I was alone.

This is about the way he addressed me:

“Criminal, have you a kind heart?”

“No!” answered I.

The abruptness of my answer seemed to disconcert him. Nevertheless, he began again hesitatingly:

“People are not wicked for the pleasure of being so.”

“Why not?” answered I. “If you have nothing but that to say to me, leave me in peace. What are you driving at?”

"I beg your pardon, criminal," he answered; "I will only say two words, which are these: If you could cause the happiness of a poor man, and that it cost you nothing, would you not do so?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Have you just come from Charnston? Surely, you cannot allude to me, as having power to confer happiness?"

He lowered his voice and assumed a mysterious air, which ill-suited with his idiotic countenance.

"Yes, criminal, yes,—happiness! fortune!" whispered he; "all this can come to me through you. See, I am a poor gendarme; the service is heavy, the pay is light; my horse is my own and ruins me. So I put into the lottery as a counterbalance. Hitherto I have only missed by not having the right numbers; I am always very near them. If I buy 76, number 77 comes out. Have a little patience, if you please, I have almost done. Well, here is a lucky opportunity for me. It appears, criminal, begging your pardon, that you are to be executed to-day. It is a certain fact that the dead who are destroyed that way, see the lottery before it is drawn on earth. Promise that your spirit shall appear to me to-morrow evening, to give me three numbers, three good ones, eh? What trouble will it

be to you? and I am not afraid of ghosts. Be easy on that point. There is my address: Caserne Popincourt, escalier A, No. 26, at the end of the corridor. You will know me again, won't you? Come even to-night, if it suits you better."

I would have disdained to reply to such an imbecile, if a mad hope had not crossed my mind. In my desperate position, there are moments when one fancies that a chain may be broken by a hair.

"Listen," said I to him, acting my part as well as a dying wretch could. "I can indeed render thee richer than the king. I can make thee gain millions—on one condition."

He opened his stupid eyes.

"What? what? I will do anything to please you, criminal."

"Then instead of three numbers I promise to tell you four. Change coats with me."

"Oh! is that all?" cried he, undoing the first hooks of his uniform cheerfully.

I rose from my chair; I watched all his movements with a beating heart. I already fancied the doors opening before the uniform of a gendarme; and then the prison—the street—the Palais de Justice—left far behind me!

But suddenly he turned round with indecision.

"I say,—it is not to get out of here?"

I saw that all was lost; nevertheless, I tried one last effort, useless as it was foolish!

"Yes, it is," said I to him; "but as thy fortune will be made . . ."

He interrupted me.

"Ah! no, indeed! stop! my numbers! To make them good, you must be dead, you know."

I sat down again, silent, and more desponding, from all the hope that I had conceived.

XXXIII.

I shut my eyes, covered them with my hands, and sought to forget the present in the past. In a rapid reverie, the recollections of childhood and youth came back one by one, soft, calm, smiling, like islands of flowers on the black gulf of confused thoughts which whirled through my brain.

I was again a child ; a laughing, healthy schoolboy, playing, running, shouting with my brothers, in the broad green walks of the old enclosure dominated by the leaden dome of Val-de-Grâce, where my first years were passed.

And then, four years later, behold me there again, still a child, but a passionate dreamer. And there is a young girl in the solitary garden.

The little Spaniard, with large eyes and long hair, her dark polished skin, her rosy lips and cheeks, the Andalusian of fourteen, Pepa.

Our mothers had told us to “go and run together,” we had come forth to walk.

They had told us to play, but we had talked instead, children of the same age but not of the same sex.

Only the year before, we used to play, and quarrel, and dispute together. I tyrannized

over Pepita for the best apple in the orchard ; I beat her for a bird's nest. She cried ; I scolded her, and we went to complain of each other to our mothers.

Now she was leaning on my arm, and I felt proud and softened. We walked slowly, and we spoke low. I gathered for her some flowers, and our hands trembled on meeting. She spoke to me of the birds, of the sky above us, of the crimson sunset behind the trees, or else of her schoolfellows, her gown and ribbons. We talked in innocence, but we both blushed. The child had grown into a young girl.

That evening, a summer night, we were walking under the chestnut trees, at the end of the garden. After a long silence she suddenly dropped my arm and said : " Let us romp ! "

I can see her yet ; she was all in black, in mourning for her grandmother. A childish idea had come into her head and she had said : " Let us romp ! "

And she began to run ahead of me ; she with her wasp-like waist and her little feet throwing her dress half way up her leg. I followed her ; she flew ; the breeze sometimes lifting her black cape, showing me her brown and shining back.

I was beside myself. I at last captured her ; and, like a conqueror, took her by the belt

and made her sit down on a bench. She was breathless and smiling. I was very serious, and gazed at her black eyes through their dark lashes.

"Sit down there," said she, "there is still daylight; let us read something. Have you a book?"

I happened to have the second volume of the *Voyages de Spallanzani* with me. I drew near her, and opened it by chance. She leaned her shoulder against mine, and we began to read the same page. Before turning the leaf, she was always obliged to wait for me. My mind was less quick than hers.

"Have you finished?" she would ask, when I had only just commenced.

Then our heads leaned together, our hair mixed, our breath gradually mingled, and at last our lips met.

When we again thought of continuing our reading, it was starlight.

"Oh! Mamma, mamma," said she on our return, "if you knew how we have romped!"

I was silent.

"You say nothing," said my mother, "you look sad."

I had paradise in my heart.

It was an evening which I will remember all my life.

All my *life*!

XXXIV.

The clock had just struck some hour, I do not know which. I do not hear the strokes plainly. I seem to have the peal of an organ in my ears. It is the confusion of my last thoughts.

At this supreme moment, when I look back over the events of life, I recall my crime with horror; but I would like to have still longer to repent it. I felt more remorse before my condemnation: since then it seems as if there were no space, but for thoughts of death. But now, how I wish to repent thoroughly. When I had lingered for a minute on what had passed in my life, and then came back to the thought of its approaching termination, I shuddered as at something new. My happy childhood! my fair youth! a golden web with its end stained! Between then and now there is a river of blood; the blood of another mingled with my own.

If any read my history, after so many years of innocence and happiness, they will not believe in this execrable year, which began by a crime, and will close with an execution; it would appear impossible.

And besides, miserable laws and miserable men ! I was not ill-disposed.

Oh ! to die in a few hours, and to think that a year ago, on this same day, I was innocent and at liberty, enjoying autumn walks, wandering beneath the trees, tramping through the leaves !

XXXV.

To think that in this same moment, there are, in the houses which encircle the Palais de Justice and the Grève, men coming and going, laughing and talking ; reading newspapers, thinking of business ; shopkeepers selling their wares, young girls preparing their ball-dresses for the evening ; and mothers playing with their children !

XXXVI.

I remember once, when a child, going alone to see the belfry of Notre-Dame.

I was already giddy from having ascended the dark winding staircase, from having crossed the slight open gallery which unites the two towers, and from having seen Paris beneath my feet, when I entered the cage of stone and wood-work where the great bell is hung.

I advanced with trembling steps over the ill-joined planks, examining at a distance that bell, so famous amongst the children and the people of Paris; and it was not without terror that I observed the slated pent-houses, which surrounded the belfry with inclined planes, were just on a level with my feet. Through the openings I saw, in a bird's-eye view, the Place du Parvis—Notre-Dame beneath, and the ant-like passers-by.

Suddenly the enormous bell rang; its deep vibration shook the air, making the heavy tower rock. The flooring started from the beams. The noise nearly upset me. I tottered, ready to fall, and seemed on the point of slipping over the pent-houses. In an agony

of terror, I lay down on the planks, pressing them closely with both my arms, speechless, breathless, with this formidable sound in my ears, and beneath my eyes this precipice, this profound abyss, where so many quiet and envied passers were walking.

Well! it appears to me, as if I were again in that belfry. All my senses seem again giddy and dazzled: the booming of that bell seems to press on my brain, and around me I no longer see that tranquil and even life which I had quitted, and where other men walk still, except from a distance, and beyond a terrible abyss.

XXXVII.

The Hotel de Ville is a sinister edifice. With its sharp steep roof, its bizarre clock-tower, its great white dial, its tiers of little columns, its thousand windows, its foot-worn stairways, its arches to the right and the left, it is there, on a level with the Grève: sombre and funereal, its face all wrinkled with age, and so black, that it is black in full daylight.

On days of execution, it vomits forth gendarmes from all its doors, and stares at the condemned with all its windows.

And at night, the dial, showing the hour, is the only light on its black façade.

XXXVIII.

It is a quarter past one.

The following are my sensations at present :

A violent pain in my head, my frame chilled, my forehead burning. Every time that I rise, or bend forward, it seems to me that there is a fluid floating in my head, which makes my brain beat violently against the bone.

I have convulsive tremblings, and from time to time my pen falls from my hand as if by a galvanic shock.

My eyes sting as though full of smoke.

I suffer greatly in all my limbs.

Only two hours and forty-five minutes more and I will be cured.

XXXIX.

They say that it is nothing, that one does not suffer, that it is an easy end; that death in this way is very much simplified.

Ah! then, what do they call this agony of six weeks, this summing up in one day? What then is the anguish of this irreparable day, which is passing so slowly and yet so fast? What is this ladder of tortures which terminates in the scaffold?

So this is not suffering.

Are not the convulsions the same whether life is taken away drop by drop, or intellect extinguished thought by thought?

And then, they say one does not suffer, but are they sure? Who told them so? Has a cut-off head ever stood on the edge of the basket and cried to the people: That does not hurt!

Are there any who have been killed in this way who have come back to give thanks and say: "It is a great invention. You can depend on it. The mechanism is perfect."

Was it Robespierre? Was it Louis XVI? . . .

No! less than a minute, less than a second, and the thing is done. None have ever,

except in mind, been in place of the one who is there, at the moment when the heavy knife falls, cutting the flesh, tearing the nerves, and breaking the vertebræ . . . But what of it! only half a second! The pain is avoided in horror!

XL.

It is singular that my mind so often reverts to the king. Whatever I do, there is always a voice within me which says :

“There is, in this same town, at this same hour, and not far from hence, in another Palais, a man who also has guards to all his gates, a man alone, like thee, in the crowd, with this difference, that he is as high, as thou art low. His entire life is glory, grandeur, delight. All around him is love, respect, veneration. The loudest voices become low in speaking to him, and the proudest heads are bent. Everything about him is gold and silk. At this moment he is holding a council of ministers, where all coincide with his opinions. Or else he thinks of the chase to-morrow,—or the ball for this evening, feeling certain that the fête will come, and leaving to others the trouble of his pleasures. Well ! this man is of flesh and blood like thee ! And in order that at this instant the scaffold should fall, and thou be restored to life, liberty, fortune, family, it would only be requisite for

him to write with this pen the seven letters of his name at the foot of a piece of paper; or even that his carriage should meet thy fatal cart! And he is good, and perhaps would like nothing better, and yet it will not be done!

XLI.

Well, then ! Let us have courage with death, take this horrible idea and consider it face to face. Ask what it is, seek to know what it wants, turn it over in our minds, fathom the enigma and look ahead into the tomb.

It seems to me that, with my eyes closed, I see a great abyss of light in which my spirit revels with ease. It seems that heaven will be so luminous that the stars, instead of being brilliant points of gold on black velvet, will appear like black points on cloth of gold.

Or, wretch that I am, it will perhaps be a hideous gulf, bottomless, the walls of which will be hung with black, into which I will fall, and keep falling forever. Or, on rising after the blow, I will perhaps find myself on some great damp plain, where my head will roll about. It seems now as though a strong wind drove it here and there, jotted about by other rolling heads. There will be marshes and brooks of some unknown and fetid liquid ; all will be black. When my eyes, in the rolling, are turned upwards, they will see nothing but the black heavens above ; they will also

see, darting about in the night, little red sparks, which, on approaching will become birds of fire. And it will be thus through all eternity.

It may also happen that at certain dates the victims of the Grève will assemble on dark nights on the place which is theirs. It will be a pale and bloody crowd, and I will not escape being one of it. There will be no moon and all will speak under their breath. The Hotel de Ville will be there with its worm-eaten façade and its pitiless dial. A hellish guillotine will be there, upon which a demon will execute an executioner; it will be at four in the morning. We in our turn will be the surrounding crowd.

It will probably be in this way. But if the dead come back, in what shape will they return? Who will have their incomplete and mutilated bodies? Will they have their choice? Will it be the head or the trunk which will be the spectre? Alas! what does death do with our soul? What is left of it? Does death sometimes lend its eyes so that it may look down on the earth and weep?

Ah! A priest! A priest who knows all this! I want a priest, and a crucifix to kiss!

My God, always the same one!

XLII.

I begged him to let me sleep ; and I threw myself on the bed.

In fact, I had a rush of blood to the head, which made me sleep. It was my last sleep of that kind.

I dreamed.

I dreamed that it was night. It seemed to me that I was in my room with two or three of my friends, I do not know whom.

My wife was lying in her bedroom, asleep, beside her child.

We were talking in loud tones, my friends and I, and what we were speaking of was frightful.

Suddenly it seemed to me I heard some noise in the other room ; a feeble noise, strange, and indescribable. My friends had likewise heard. We listened ; it was like a lock opening stiffly, like a bolt drawn carefully. It was something startling ; it froze us with fear. We thought perhaps it was robbers who had got into the house, as it was far into the night.

We decided to go and investigate. I rose, took a candle. My friends followed me, in single file.

We passed through the bedroom. My wife was sleeping with her child.

Then we came to the salon. Nothing. The portraits in their golden frames were motionless on the red hangings. It seemed to me that the door of the dining room had been moved.

We entered the dining room ; we inspected it thoroughly. I went first. The door to the stairs was tightly closed, the windows likewise. Near the stove, I saw that the door of the linen cupboard was open, and was turned back against the wall as though to hide something.

That surprised me. We concluded there was some one behind the door.

I put out my hand to close the door ; it resisted. Astonished, I pulled harder, it suddenly gave way, and we discovered a little old woman, her hands hanging by her side, her eyes closed, motionless, and standing as though glued to the angle of the wall.

There was something hideous about her, and my hair stands on end when I think of her.

I asked her :

“What are you doing there?”

She did not answer.

I asked :

"Who are you?"

She neither answered, nor moved, and her eyes remained closed.

My friends said:

"She is no doubt an accomplice of some one who has entered with bad intent; they have escaped on hearing us approach; she was not able to, and has hidden there."

I questioned her anew; she remained motionless and silent, without a look.

One of us gave her a push, and she fell to the floor. She fell all of a heap, like a piece of wood, like a dead thing.

We kicked her, then two of us lifted her and leaned her against the wall. She gave no sign of life whatever. Some one shouted in her ear, but she was as silent as though she had been deaf.

Meanwhile, we were losing patience, and becoming more angry than afraid. One of us said:

"Put the candle under her chin."

I put the burning wick under her chin. Then she half-opened one eye; an empty, wan, frightful eye that saw nothing.

I took away the candle and said:

"Ah! at last! will you answer now, old sorceress?"

"Who are you?"

The eye closed again as before.

"Really, this is too much," said the others. Again the candle! Again! she must speak.

I again held the candle under the old woman's chin.

Then she opened both eyes slowly, looked at us all, one after the other, then, stooping over suddenly blew out the candle. At that very moment, in the darkness, I felt three sharp teeth pressed into my hand.

I awoke, shivering, and bathed in a cold sweat.

The good priest was seated at the foot of my bed, reading his prayers.

"Have I slept long?" I asked him.

"My son," said he, "you have slept an hour. They have brought your child. She is awaiting you in the adjoining room. I did not wish them to waken you."

"Oh!" I cried. "My daughter! Let them bring me my daughter!"

XLIII.

She is rosy and happy, and her large eyes are bright, she is so pretty !

They had put on a dress very becoming to her.

I drew her toward me, I raised her in my arms, and placing her on my knees, kissed her hair.

Why is her mother not with her? She was very ill, and grandmother also.

She looked at me with astonishment. Caressed, embraced, devoured with kisses, she submitted quietly ; but, from time to time, cast an uneasy look towards her nurse, who was crying in the corner.

At last I was able to speak.

“Marie,” I exclaimed. “My little Marie!”

I pressed her violently against my breast which was heaving with sobs. She uttered a little cry. “Oh ! you hurt me, sir,” she said.

“*Sir !*” It is nearly a year since she has seen me, poor child ! She has forgotten me, face, words, voice ; and then who could know me with this beard, this dress, and this pallor ! What ? already effaced from that memory, the

only one where I wished to survive! What! already, no longer a father, am I condemned to hear no more that word, in the language of children so soft that it cannot remain in the vocabulary of men: *Papa!*

And yet to have heard it from that sweet mouth, once more, only once more, that is all that I would have asked in payment for the forty years of life they will take from me.

"Listen, Marie," said I to her, joining her two little hands in mine. "Do you know me?"

She looked at me with her bright eyes and answered:

"Oh, no, indeed!"

"Look at me well," I repeated. "What? dost thou not know who I am?"

"Yes, sir," she answered. "A gentleman."

Alas! while loving one being on earth, loving with all your deep affection, having that being before you, who sees and looks at you, speaks and answers you, and yet knows you not! You wish for consolation but from this one being, who is the only one that does not know, that you require it because you are going to die!

"Marie," I continued, "hast thou a papa?"

"Yes, sir," said the child.

"Well, then, where is he?"

She raised her large eyes in astonishment.

"Ah! then you don't know? He is dead."

Then she began to cry; I nearly let her fall.

"Dead!" I exclaimed: "Marie, knowest thou what it is to be dead?"

"Yes, sir," she answered. "He is in earth and in heaven."

She continued of her own accord:

"I pray to God for him morning and evening at mamma's knees."

I kissed her on the forehead.

"Marie, say to me thy prayer."

"I could not, sir; you do not say prayers in the middle of the day. Come to-night to my house, and you shall hear me say it."

This was enough. I interrupted her.

"Marie, it is I who am thy papa."

"Ah!" returned she.

I added, "Wouldst thou like me for thy papa?"

The child turned away.

"No, sir; my papa was much prettier."

I covered her with kisses and tears. She tried to escape from my arms, crying:

"You scratch me with your beard."

Then, I replaced her on my knees, devouring her with my eyes, and continued:

"Marie, canst thou read?"

"Yes," she answered, "I can read very well. Mamma makes me read my letters."

"Well, then, read a little to me," said I, pointing to a printed paper which she held crumpled in one of her little hands.

She shook her pretty head.

"Oh! I can only read fables."

"But try, come, read."

She unfolded the paper, and began to spell with her finger,

"S, E, N—sen, T, E, N, C, E—tence,—
SENTENCE."

I snatched it from her hands. It was a copy of my own sentence of death she was reading to me. Her nurse had bought the paper for a sou. It had cost me much more.

No words can convey what I felt; my violence had alarmed the child, who was ready to cry. Suddenly she said to me:

"Give me back my paper; I want to play with it!"

I restored her to her nurse.

"Take her away!"

And I fell back in my chair, gloomy, desolate, in despair! Now they may come; I care for nothing more; the last fibre of my heart is broken. I am ready for whatever they do.

XLIV.

The priest is kind ; so is the jailer. I believe tears came in their eyes when I sent away my child.

It is done. Now I must fortify myself, and think firmly of the executioner, of the cart, of the gendarmes, of the crowd on the bridge, of the crowd in the street and of the crowd at the windows, and of what they have erected for me in the Place de la Grève.

I believe I have still an hour to familiarize myself with these ideas.

XLV.

All the people will laugh and clap their hands, and applaud. Yet among those men, now free, unknown to jailers, and who run with joy to an execution, in that throng there is more than one man whose head is destined to follow mine sooner or later, into the red basket. More than one who is here to-day on my account, will come hereafter on his own.

For these fated beings there is a certain fascination in the fatal spot on the Grève; a centre of attraction. They are drawn towards what they are to be.

XLVI.

My little Marie! She is gone away to play; she will look at the crowd from the window of a cab, and already she thinks no more of the "Gentleman." Perhaps I may still have time to write a few pages for her, so that she may read them hereafter; and weep, in fifteen years hence, for the sorrow of to-day.

Yes, she shall know my history from myself, and why the name I leave her is tarnished.

XLVII.

MY HISTORY

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.—The pages which immediately followed this have not yet been found. Perhaps, as the next chapter seems to indicate, the condemned had not time to write his history. It was so late when he thought of it.

XLVIII.

From a room in the Hotel de Ville.

The Hotel de Ville! . . . So I am here.

The execrable journey is over. The place of execution is before me, and beneath the window, a horrible throng, laughing and yelling, while they await my appearance.

My efforts at composure were vain. My heart failed me. When above the heads of the crowd, I saw the frightful scaffold, my heart failed. I asked to be allowed to make a last declaration. So they brought me in here, and have sent for some prosecutor to receive it. I am now waiting for him; so there is thus much gained.

Let us see.

At three o'clock, they came to tell me it was time. I trembled, as though I had thought of anything else during the last six hours, six weeks, six months. It produced on me the effect of something quite unexpected.

They made me cross corridors, and descend stairs, they pushed me through a low door into a sombre room, narrow, arched, and

scarcely lighted on this rainy, foggy day. A chair was in the centre, on which they told me to sit ; I seated myself.

Some persons were standing near the door ; and, beside the priest and gendarmes, there were three other men.

The first of these, the tallest and oldest, was stout, with a red face. He wore a long coat and a cocked hat. This was *he*.

This was the executioner ; the servant of the guillotine : the others were his servants.

When I was seated, these walked quietly behind me : then suddenly I felt the cold of steel in my hair, and heard the grating action of scissors.

My hair, cut carelessly, fell in heavy locks on my shoulders, and the man with the three-cornered hat removed them gently with his coarse hand.

All in the room spoke in subdued tones.

There was a heavy dull sound from without, which I fancied at first was caused by the river : but a shout of laughter soon proved to me that it was the crowd.

A young man near the window, who was writing with a pencil, in his pocket-book, asked one of the turnkeys, what was the name of the present operation ?

“ The Toilet of the Condemned,” he was answered.

From this I understood that it would be in to-morrow's newspaper.

Suddenly one of the servants removed my vest, and the other one taking my hands, placed them behind me, and I felt the knots of a cord rolled slowly round my wrists, at the same time the other took off my cravat. My linen shirt, the only remains of former times, being of the finest quality, caused him a sort of hesitation for a moment: but at length he began to cut off the collar.

At this dreadful precaution, and the sensation of the steel touching my neck, a tremor passed over me, and a stifled groan escaped; the man's hand trembled.

"Sir," said he, "I beg your pardon! Have I hurt you?"

These executioners are gentle fellows.

The people shouted louder in the street.

The tall red-faced man offered a handkerchief, steeped in vinegar, for me to inhale.

"Thank you," said I, to him, in the firmest tone I was able to command, "it is needless; I am recovered."

Then one of the men stooped down and fastened a small cord to my ankles, which restricted my steps; and this was again tied to the cord around my wrists. Finally the tall man threw my vest over my shoulders, and tied the sleeves in front. All was now completed.

Then the priest drew near with his crucifix.

"Come, my son," said he.

The men raised me by my arms: and I walked, but my steps were weak and tottering.

At this moment the folding doors were thrown open. A furious clamor, a chill breeze, and a strong white light, reached me in the shade. From the extreme of the dark chamber I saw through the rain a thousand yelling heads of the expectant mass. On the right of the door-way, a range of mounted gendarmes; in front a detachment of soldiers; on the left, the back of the cart, with a ladder. A hideous picture, with the appropriate frame of a prison-door.

It was for this dread moment that I had reserved my courage. I advanced a few steps, and appeared on the threshold.

"There he is! there he is!" cried the crowd. "He is coming at last!"

And the nearest to me clapped their hands. Much as a king might be loved, there could not be more greeting for him.

It was an ordinary cart, the horse was lean, and the driver wore a blue smock coat with red pattern, like those worn by the market gardeners around Bicêtre.

The tall man with the three-cornered hat ascended the cart first.

“Good-morning, Mr. Sampson!” cried the children hanging by the lamp-posts.

One of his servants followed.

“Bravo, Tuesday!” cried out the children, as the two placed themselves on the front seat.

It was now my turn. I mounted with a pretty firm step.

“He keeps up well!” said a woman beside the gendarmes.

This atrocious commendation gave me courage. The priest took his seat beside me. They had placed me on the hindmost seat, my back towards the horse. I shuddered at this last attention.

There was a mixture of humanity in it.

I wished to look around me ; gendarmes in front, gendarmes behind : then crowd ! crowd ! crowd ! A sea of heads in the street.

A detachment of mounted gendarmes were waiting for me at the gate of the Palais.

The officer gave the word, and the procession moved on, as if pushed forward by a yell from the populace.

We passed the gate. At the moment the cart turned towards the Pont-au-Change a shout went up from the pavement to the roof.

Here the detachment gathered around me.

“Hats off ! hats off !” cried a thousand voices together—as if for the king. Then I

laughed horribly also myself, and said to the priest:

“They, their hats, . . . me, my head.”

The Quai-au-Fleurs was blooming; it was market-day. The dealers left their flowers to look at me.

Opposite the square there is a street full of cabarets, in which the windows were filled with spectators, seeming to enjoy their good places, particularly the women. That day should have been a good one for the cabarets.

There were also people letting out tables, chairs and carts: and these dealers in human blood shouted at the top of their voices:

“Who wishes places?”

A strange rage seized me against these wretches. I longed to shout out to them:

“Who wishes mine?”

Meanwhile the cart still advanced. At each step, the crowd in the rear dispersed; and I saw, with my wandering eyes, that they collected again farther on, to have another view.

Crossing the Pont-au-Change, I chanced to look back. My glance rested on another quay, where above the houses, stood a black tower, isolated, bristling with sculptures, at the top of which I saw two stone monsters. I do not know why I asked the priest what the tower was.

“Saint - Jacques - la - Boucherie,” answered the executioner.

I do not know how it was ; but in the fog, and despite the fine rain, which hung over all like a curtain, nothing which happened escaped me. Every one of the details caused me torture. Words failed to express my emotions.

Towards the middle of the Pont-au-Change, so steep that we mounted it with difficulty, horror came violently upon me. I feared I would faint, last vanity ! Then I tried to blind and deafen myself to all about me, except to the priest, whose words I hardly heard, mingled with the tumult.

I took the crucifix and kissed it.

“Have mercy on me,” said I, “oh ! my God !” And I strove to engross myself with this thought.

But every shake of the cart disturbed me ; and then I became excessively chilled, as the rain had penetrated my clothes, and my head was bare.

“Are you trembling with cold, my son ?” demanded the priest.

“Yes,” answered I.

Alas ! not only from cold.

At the turn to the bridge, the women expressed pity at my being so young.

We approached the fatal quay : my hearing and sight seemed about to fail me : all those

voices, all those heads at the windows, at doors, at shop fronts, on lamp-posts; these thirsting and cruel spectators; this crowd where all knew me, and I knew none; this road paved and walled with human visages; I was confounded, stupefied, senseless. There is something insupportable in the weight of so many looks being fixed upon one.

I swayed in my place on the seat; and paid no further attention to the priest, or the crucifix.

In the tumult which surrounded me, I no longer distinguished exclamations of pity from those of satisfaction, or the sounds of laughter, from those of complaint. All formed together a noise in my ears like sounding brass.

My eyes read mechanically the signs over the shops.

Once I felt a painful curiosity to look round on *that* which we were approaching. It was the last mental bravado, but the body would not aid it; for my neck remained paralyzed, and as though dead.

I saw on my left, beyond the river, the tower of Notre-Dame, which, seen from this point, hid the other. There were many people on it, and they ought to have been able to see well.

And the cart went on,—on, and the shops passed away; the signs succeeded each other, written, painted, gilded; and the populace

laughed, while they tramped through the mud, —and I yielded my mind, as persons do in sleeping.

Suddenly this series of shops ended as we turned into the square; the voice of the mob became still more loud, yelling, and joyous; the cart stopped suddenly, and I had nearly fallen on my face, on the planks. The priest held me up—"Courage!" murmured he.—They next brought a ladder to the back of the cart. I leaned on the arm of the priest and descended. I made one step, and turned round to advance another; but I had not the power. Between the lamps of the quay, I saw something sinister.

Oh! it was the reality!

I stopped, as if staggered by a blow.

"I have a last declaration to make!" I cried feebly.

And then they brought me up here.

I asked them to let me write my last wishes. They unbound my hands, but the cord is here, ready to be replaced.

XLIX.

A judge, a commissioner, a magistrate, I know not what was his rank, has just been here. I entreated him to procure my pardon, I begged it, with clasped hands, and dragging myself on my knees at his feet. He asked, with a fatal smile, if that were all I had to say to him.

“My pardon! my pardon!” I repeated, “or, for pity’s sake, five minutes more!”

“Who knows? my pardon may come! It is so horrible at my age to die in this manner! Reprieves have frequently arrived, even at the last moment! And to whom would they show mercy, sir, if not to me?”

That detestable executioner! He came in to tell the judge that the execution was ordered for a certain hour; that the hour was at hand, and that he was answerable for the event.

“Oh! for pity’s sake! one minute to wait for my pardon! or I will defend myself, I will bite!”

The judge and the executioner went out. I am alone; alone with two gendarmes.

Oh! that horrible throng, with its hyena cry.—Who knows! but that I shall escape from it? That I shall be saved? If my pardon. . . . It is impossible but that they will pardon me! Ah! the wretches! It seems to me some one is coming up-stairs. . . .

FOUR O'CLOCK.

NOTES

1829.—We reproduce here, for persons interested in this sort of literature, the *argot* song, reproduced from a copy found among the papers of the condemned. The explanation of the words is written in the hand of the condemned. It is probable that, impressed by this song, but unable to remember it, he secured a copy from some one in the jail. The only thing which this facsimile does not reproduce, is the appearance of the paper, which is yellow, sordid, and crumpled.—V. H.

1881.—The manuscript of *The Last Day of a Condemned* bears on the margin of the first page: *Tuesday, 14 October, 1828*. At the foot of the last page: *Night of the 25 December, 1828, to the 26th—at three o'clock in the morning*.

¹ The ministers, who were afterwards imprisoned in the fortress of Ham.

² La Porte says twenty-two strokes, but Aubrey says thirty-four. Monsieur de Chalais shrieked until the twentieth.

³ The Parliament of Otaheite has just abolished capital punishment.

⁴ In France a parricide has the right hand taken off prior to execution; and all criminals about to be

guillotined have their hair removed, lest the axe might be impeded, and thus cause extra suffering.

⁵ See facsimile of this song.

⁶ "I have sweated an oak and am put in the oven,"
i. e., has killed a man and is put in prison.

⁷ "Dance where there is no floor," *i. e.*, hung.

CLAUDE GUEUX

CLAUDE GUEUX

Seven or eight years ago, a man, named Claude Gueux, a poor workman, was living in Paris. He had with him a girl who was his mistress, and child of this girl. I give the facts as they are and leave my readers to derive the moral. Although his education had been neglected, and he could not even read, the man was naturally clever and intelligent, and thought deeply over matters. Winter came with its attendant miseries—want of work, want of food, want of fuel. The man, the girl, the child, were frozen and famished. The man turned thief. I know not what he stole. What does it signify, as the result was the same: for the woman and child, three days' bread and firing; for the man, five years' imprisonment.

The man was sent to do his time in the central prison at Clairvaux. Clairvaux, that abbey now converted into a prison, its cells into dungeons, and the altar itself into a pillory. When we speak of progress this is how certain people consider it. That is what they call it.

Let us continue.

Arriving there, they put him into a cell at night, and into a workroom by day. I do not blame them for the workroom.

Claude Gueux, the honest workman, turned thief from force of circumstances, had a countenance which impressed you: a high forehead somewhat lined with care, dark hair already streaked with gray, deep-set eyes beaming with kindness; whilst the lower part clearly indicated firmness mingled with self-respect. It was a fine head. We will see what society did with it.

He rarely spoke, yet there was a certain dignity in the man which commanded respect and obedience. He had moreover suffered much.

Over the workshop in which Claude Gueux was placed, was an inspector, who, to his subordinates, was at the same time a jailer and a merchant, handing them the tools with one hand, and menacing them with the other. A tyrant, never using even self-reasoning, with ideas against which there was no appeal, hard rather than firm, at times he could even be jocular: otherwise, on occasion, a good fellow, a prince, jovial, and jesting with a good grace, really not vicious, but bad. He was one of those men who never can grasp a fresh idea, who apparently fail to be moved by any

emotion; yet with hatred and rage in their hearts they look like blocks of wood, heated on the one side but frozen on the other. This man's chief characteristic was obstinacy; and so proud was he of this very stubbornness that he compared himself to Napoleon. This was an optical delusion, like taking the mere flicker of a candle for a star. When he had made up his mind to a thing, however absurd, he would carry out that absurd idea. How often it happens, that, when a catastrophe occurs, if we inquire into the cause, we find it originated through the obstinacy of one with little ability, but having full faith in his own powers.

Such was the inspector of the central prison at Clairvaux. A man of flint placed by society over others, hoping each day to strike sparks out of such material.

But a spark from such a source often ends in a conflagration.

As we said before, as soon as he arrived at Clairvaux, Claude Gueux was numbered and placed in one of the workshops and set to work. The inspector soon singled him out, and, finding him clever, treated him well. Seeing Claude looking sad—for he was ever thinking of her he termed *his wife*—and, being in a good humor, by way of pastime, and to console the prisoner, he told him the

woman had become one of the unfortunate sisterhood, and taken to infamy. Claude asked coldly what had become of the child. No one knew.

After a time Claude had accustomed himself to prison rule, and acquired a calmness of manner, and a certain serene resolution was clearly marked in his face.

He acquired a great ascendancy over his companions, who so much admired him that they consulted, and tried in all ways, to imitate him. The very expression in his eyes clearly indicated the man's character; besides, is not the eye the window to the soul, and what other result could be anticipated than that an intelligent spirit should lead men with few ideas, who yielded to the attraction as the metal does to the loadstone. Claude was loved.

In less than three months Claude was the virtual head of the workshop, and at times he almost doubted whether he was king or prisoner, treated something like a captive pope, surrounded by his cardinals.

And, as such popularity ever has its attendant hatred, though beloved by the prisoners, Claude became detested by the jailers. It is always thus. There is never popularity without dislike. Love among slaves is always doubled by the hatred of the master.

Claude Gueux was a great eater. It was a peculiarity of his organization. His stomach was such that for him two men's rations would have been scarcely sufficient. M. de Cotadilla laughed at this, as his own appetite was large; but what was cause for rejoicing to a duke, a grandee of Spain, who had five thousand sheep, to a prisoner was a great misfortune.

When a free man Claude Gueux could earn his daily four-pound loaf and enjoy it, but Claude Gueux as a prisoner worked daily, and for his labor received one pound and a-half of bread and four ounces of meat; it naturally followed that Claude was always hungry in the prison at Clairvaux.

He was hungry, and there it ended. He never spoke of it. Such was his nature.

One day, Claude had just finished his meagre fare, and was about to resume his labors, hoping in work to forget famine, when a weakly-looking young man came towards him, holding a knife and his untasted rations in his hand, but seemingly afraid to address him. This young man, and his bread, and his meat, annoyed Claude.

"What do you want?" said he, roughly.

"A favor at your hands," timidly replied the young man.

"What?" said Claude.

"Help me with my rations, I have more than I can eat."

For a moment tears were in Claude's eyes, but without further ceremony he divided the food in two and took one-half and began to eat.

"Thank you," said the young man; "and allow me to share my rations with you every day."

"What is your name?" said Claude.

"Albin."

"Why are you here?" added Claude.

"I stole."

"So did I," said Claude.

The same scene took place daily, Claude, old before his time—he was only thirty-six, but at times he seemed fifty, so severe was his look. Albin was twenty, but looked at the most, seventeen. The feeling was more like that of father and son than that of one brother to another. Albin was still almost a child; Claude was already almost an old man.

They worked together in the same shop, they slept in the same quarters and exercised in the same court-yard. They were happy, for they were all the world to each other!

We have already spoken of the inspector of the workshop. He was so hated by the prisoners that he often had recourse to Claude Gueux, whom they loved, to enforce his

authority. On one occasion when a tumult was on the point of breaking out, a few words from Claude had had more effect than the authority of ten warders. Although the inspector was glad to avail himself of this influence, he was jealous, and hated the reformed robber with an envious and implacable feeling—an example of might over right.

Hatred is all the more fearful when it is secretly nourished.

Claude cared so much for Albin that he thought little about the inspector.

One day, in the morning, as the warders were going their rounds one of them summoned Albin, who was working with Claude, and told him to go before the inspector.

“What are you wanted for?” asked Claude.

“I do not know,” replied Albin.

The warder led away Albin.

The morning passed, Albin did not return to the shop. All day Claude looked in vain for his companion, and at night, finding him still absent, he broke through his ordinary reserve and addressed the turnkey.

“Is Albin ill?” said he.

“No,” replied the man.

“How is it then,” said Claude, “that he has not put in an appearance to-day?”

“Ah!” said the turnkey carelessly, “his quarters have been changed.”

Those who noticed what was taking place, remarked that at this response of the jailer, Claude's hand, in which was a lighted candle, trembled slightly. He replied calmly :

"Who gave the order?"

The jailer answered :

"Monsieur D——."

This was the inspector's name.

The next day passed like the former, with no sign of Albin.

On the following night the inspector, Monsieur D——, went his rounds as usual ; Claude, who had perceived him from the distance, rose, and hastened to raise his woolen cap and button his gray woolen vest to the throat—considered, in prison discipline, a mark of respect to superiors. He stood at his bench awaiting the inspector, who passed by him.

"Sir!" said Claude.

The inspector turned.

"Sir," said Claude, "has Albin really been quartered elsewhere?"

"Yes," replied the inspector.

"Sir," said Claude, "I cannot live without him."

He added :

"You know the rations are insufficient for me, and Albin divided his portion with me."

"That was his lookout," said the inspector.

"Sir, could you not manage to let Albin resume his old place near me?"

"Impossible, the order cannot be revoked."

"By whom was it given?"

"By me."

"Monsieur D——," replied Claude, "on you my life depends."

"I never cancel an order once given."

"Sir, what have I ever done to you?"

"Nothing."

"Why, then," cried Claude, "separate me from Albin?"

"Because I do," replied the inspector.

This explanation given, the inspector passed on.

Claude's head sunk down, like the poor caged lion deprived of his dog!

We are forced to confess that this grief, though so deeply felt, in no way changed his appetite—he was famished.

Many offered to share their rations with him, but he refused smiling.

He continued his usual routine in silence, breaking it only to ask the inspector each evening, in tones of anguish mingled with rage, something between a prayer and a threat, these two words: "And Albin?" The inspector simply passed on, shrugging his shoulders.

The man was wrong to do so, for it was

evident to all that Claude Gueux had determined upon some course. The whole prison awaited anxiously this struggle between stubbornness and resolution.

He was heard to say to the inspector one day :

“Sir, listen to me ; send my companion to me. It would be wise to do so, I can assure you. Remember my words.”

Another time, on a Sunday, he had sat for hours in the court-yard, with his head bowed in his hands, and when a prisoner called Faillette came up laughing, and asked :

“What the devil are you doing, Claude?”

Claude raised his head and answered seriously :

“I am judging some one.”

The evening of the 25th of October, 1831, as the inspector went his rounds, Claude, to draw his attention, smashed a watch-glass he had found in the passage. This had the desired effect.

“It was I,” said Claude. “Sir, restore my comrade to me.”

“Impossible,” answered the master.

“You must however,” said Claude, and, looking the inspector full in the face, firmly added :

“Now reflect ; to-day is the 25th of October, I give you till the 4th of November.”

A warder remarked that Claude was threatening Monsieur D——, and ought at once to be locked up.

“No, it is not a case of blackhole,” replied the inspector, smiling disdainfully; “we must be considerate with this sort of people !”

The following day Claude was again accosted by one of the prisoners named Pernot, as he was brooding in the court-yard.

“Well ! Claude, you are sad indeed ; what are you pondering over ?”

“*I am afraid,*” answered Claude, “*some evil will happen to that good Monsieur D——.*”

There are nine full days between the 25th of October and the 4th of November. Claude daily impressed the fact on the inspector how much Albin’s absence affected him, the inspector, annoyed, gave him, because the prayers seemed like threats, four-and-twenty hours’ solitary confinement. That is all the satisfaction he got.

The 4th of November arrived. That day he awoke serenely and he looked round for the little that remained to remind him of his former life. A pair of scissors, and an old volume of the *Émile*, belonging to the woman he had loved so well, the mother of his child—how useless to Claude as he could neither work nor read !

As he walked down the old cloisters, so dishonored by its new inmates and its fresh whitewashed walls, he noticed how earnestly the convict Ferrari was looking at the heavy iron bars which crossed the window. Claude showed him the scissors and said :

“To-night I will cut through those bars with these scissors.”

Ferrari laughed incredulously, and Claude joined in the mirth.

During the day he worked with more than ordinary ardor, wishing to finish a straw hat which he had been paid for in advance by a tradesman at Troyes, M. Bressier.

Shortly before noon he made some excuse to go down into the carpenters' workshop, a story below his own, at the time the warders were absent. Claude received a hearty welcome, as he was equally popular here as elsewhere.

They cried :

“Ah ! here is Claude.”

They gathered around him. It was like a fête. Claude quickly glanced about the room. None of the warders were there.

“Can any one lend me an axe?” said he.

“What for?” they asked.

He at once replied—

“To kill the inspector to-night.”

He was at once offered several ; choosing the smallest, he hid it beneath his waistcoat and left.

Now there were twenty-seven prisoners present, and not one of those men betrayed him.

They even refrained from talking upon the subject among themselves.

Each waited for the event which must follow. It was terrible but simple. Claude could be neither advised nor denounced.

An hour later as he passed on, he saw a young convict of sixteen yawning idly and he strongly advised him to learn how to read. Just then Faillette asked what he was hiding. Claude answered unhesitatingly :

“An axe to kill Monsieur D—— to-night.”

Then he added :

“Can you see it?”

“A little,” said Faillette.

The rest of the day passed as usual. At seven o'clock the prisoners were locked in their several workshops. It was then the custom for the warders to leave them, until the inspector had been his rounds.

Claude was locked up with his companions as usual.

Then in the workshop a most extraordinary scene took place, the only one of the kind on record.

Then Claude rose and addressed his companions, in the following words :

“You all know Albin and I were like brothers. I liked him at first for sharing his

rations with me, afterward because he cared for me. Now I never have sufficient, though I spend the pittance I earn in bread. It could make no possible difference to the inspector, Monsieur D——, that we should be together ; but he chose to separate us simply from a love of tormenting, for he is a bad man. I asked again and again for Albin to be sent back, without success ; and when I gave him a stated time, the 4th of November, I was thrust into a dungeon. During that time I became his judge, and sentenced him to death on November the 4th. In two hours he will be here, and I warn you I intend to kill him. But have you anything to say ?”

There was a dead silence.

Claude then continued telling his comrades, the eighty-one thieves, his ideas on the subject. He declared that he was going to commit a violent action, but that he was not in the wrong.

That he was reduced to a fearful extremity.

That he was compelled by that very necessity to take the law into his own hands.

That he knew full well he could not take the inspector's life without sacrificing his own ; but as the cause was a just one, he would bear the consequences.

That he had come to this conclusion after two months' calm reflection.

That if they considered resentment alone hurried him on to such a step, they were at once to say so.

That he wished them to say if they had any objections to the sentence being carried out.

One voice alone broke the silence which followed, saying that, before killing the inspector, Claude ought to give him a chance of relenting.

"That is but just," said Claude, "and I will give it."

Claude then sorted the few things a poor prisoner is allowed, and gave them to the comrades he cared for most after Albin, keeping only the pair of scissors. He then embraced them all; some could not withhold their tears at such a moment. Claude continued calmly to converse during this last hour, and even amused himself by a trick he had learned when a *gamin*, of extinguishing the candle with a breath from his nostril. Seeing him thus, his companions afterwards owned, they hoped he had abandoned his sinister idea.

He noticed that one young convict looked at him fixedly, trembling at what he was going to see.

"Take courage, young fellow," said Claude, gently, "it will be but the work of a minute."

When he had distributed all his clothes, taken farewell of all of them, shaken all

hands, he interrupted some loud talking in a corner, and commanded all to go to work. All obeyed in silence.

The workshop was a long room with a door at both ends, and windows each side overlooking the benches, thus leaving a pathway up the centre for the inspector to review the work on both sides of him.

Claude had now resumed his work—like Jacques Clement, who never forgot to say his prayers.

All waited. The moment approached, suddenly the sound of the clock was heard. Claude said :

“It is a quarter before.”

Then he rose and placed himself near the entrance, apparently calm. His face was perfectly serene.

Amidst the most profound silence the clock struck nine; the door was thrown open, and the inspector came in.

He was alone as usual.

He entered looking quite jovial and self-satisfied, passing rapidly along, tossing his head, grinding words, little heeding the eyes fixed so fiercely upon him.

Suddenly he turned, surprised at hearing steps behind him.

It was Claude, who had followed him some instants in silence.

"What are you doing here? why are you not in your place?"

For a man is not a man there: he is like a dog.

Claude answered respectfully:

"I wish to speak to you, sir."

"Of what?"

"Albin."

"Again!" said the inspector.

"Always," said Claude.

"So then," replied the inspector, walking along, "you have not had enough with twenty-four hours in the blackhole?"

Claude, following him closely, continued:

"Sir, return my companion to me."

"Impossible!"

"Sir," continued Claude, in a voice which would have moved satan, "I implore you to send Albin back to me; you will then see how I will work. You are free, and it would matter but little to you; you do not know the feeling of having only one friend. To me it is everything, encircled by the prison walls. You can come and go at your pleasure; I have but Albin. Pray let him come back to me! You know well he shared his food with me. What can it matter to you that a man named Claude Gueux should be in this hall, having another by his side called Albin? You have but to say 'Yes,' nothing more. Sir, my good sir,

I implore you, in the name of Heaven, to grant my prayer!"

Claude, overcome with emotion, waited for the answer. The inspector replied, impatiently:

"Impossible. I will not recall my words. Now go, you annoy me."

And, as though late, he hurried on towards the outer door, amidst the breathless silence maintained by the eighty-one thieves.

Claude gently touched the inspector's arm.

"Let me at least know why I am condemned to death. Why did you separate us?"

"I have already answered you," said the inspector, "because I chose."

And, turning his back, he put out his hand to lift the latch.

At this answer Claude stepped back. The eighty-one statues saw him take from his trousers the axe, and without a cry the inspector fell to the ground, with his skull completely cloven from three heavy blows dealt with the rapidity of lightning. A fourth completely disfigured his face, and Claude, in his mad fury, gave another and a useless blow. For the inspector was dead.

Claude, throwing the axe aside, cried out, *Now for the other*. The other was himself.

Taking the scissors, "his wife's," he plunged them into his breast; but the blade

was short, and the chest was deep, and vainly he strove to give the fatal blow. After twenty stabs he cried: "Damned heart, I cannot find it!" At last covered with blood, he fell fainting across the dead.

Which of the two should be considered the victim of the other?

When Claude recovered consciousness he was in bed, surrounded by every care and covered with bandages. Near him were sisters of charity, and moreover a recorder ready to take down his deposition, who with much interest said: "*How do you do?*"

He had lost a great deal of blood, but the scissors had done him a bad turn, inflicting wounds not one the least dangerous: the only mortal blows he had struck were on the body of Monsieur D——.

Then the interrogatory commenced. They asked him if he had killed the inspector of the prison workshops at Clairvaux? *Yes*, was the reply. They asked him, "why he did so?" He answered: *Because*.

Meanwhile, at certain times, his wounds assumed a more serious aspect, and he was prostrated with fever which threatened his life.

November, December, January and February passed, in nursing and preparations, and Claude in turn was visited by doctor and

judge—the one to restore him to health, the other to glean the foundation for his scaffold.

Let us hasten. On the 16th of March, 1832, perfectly cured, Claude appeared in court at Troyes, to answer the charge brought against him. The largest crowd the town could produce was there.

Claude's appearance impressed the court favorably; he had been shaved and stood bareheaded, but still clad in the prison garb of Clairvaux, made of two shades of gray.

The prosecutor had the court well guarded by a strong military guard, for the purpose, as he said, "of keeping these rascals who were to serve as witnesses within bounds," as they were all convicts.

But, in the midst of the debate, an unexpected difficulty occurred: not one of these men would give evidence; neither questions nor threats availed to make them break their silence, until Claude requested them to do so.

Then only were their tongues loosened, and they told what they had seen. They gave a faithful account of the terrible event, and if one, from forgetfulness or affection for the accused, failed to relate the whole facts, Claude supplied the deficiency.

At one time the women's tears fell fast. The usher now called the convict Albin. He came

in trembling with emotion and sobbing painfully, and threw himself into Claude's arms. Turning to the public prosecutor, Claude said smilingly :

"Here is a rascal who divided his food to the hungry." And stooping, he kissed Albin's hand.

All the witnesses having been examined, the counsel for the prosecution then rose to address the court.

"Gentlemen of the jury, society would be utterly put to confusion if a public prosecution did not condemn great culprits like him, who, etc."

After this long address, Claude's counsel rose. Then followed the usual pleading for and against, which always takes place in the sort of hippodrome called the criminal court.

Claude, in his turn, gave evidence, and people were astonished at his intelligence ; and there appeared far more of the orator about this poor workman than the assassin. In a clear and straightforward way he detailed the facts as they were—standing proudly there, resolved to tell the whole truth.

At times the crowd was carried away by his eloquence.

This man, who could not read, would grasp the most difficult points of argument, yet treat the judges with all due deference.

Once only Claude lost his temper, when the counsel for the prosecution stated that he had assassinated the inspector *without provocation*.

"What!" cried Claude, "I had no provocation! Indeed: so a drunkard strikes me, I kill him, then you would allow there was provocation—the penalty of death would be changed for that of the galleys; but a man who wounds me in every way during four years, humiliates me for four years, taunts me daily, hourly, for four years, and heaps every insult on my head—what follows? You consider I have had no provocation. I had a wife for whom I robbed—he tortured me about her; I had a child for whom I stole—he taunted me about this child; I was hungry, a friend shared his bread with me—he took away my friend. I begged him to return my friend to me; he cast me into a dungeon. I told him how much I suffered; he said it wearied him to listen. What then would you have me do? I took his life, and you look upon me as a monster for killing this man, I have not been provoked, so you wish to decapitate me. Do so."

Sublime law, which makes no allowance for provocation such as this; the law fails to acknowledge such, because the blows have no marks to show.

The debate ended, the judge summed up the case in a clear and impartial manner. A villanous life. A monster indeed. Claude had commenced by living in concubinage with a girl, then had stole, then he had killed. All this was true.

Before the jury retired, the judge asked Claude if he had any questions to ask, or anything to say.

"Very little," said Claude, "I am a murderer, I am a thief; but I ask you, gentlemen of the jury, why did I kill? why did I steal?"

The jury retired for a quarter of an hour, and according to the judgment of these twelve countrymen—*gentlemen of the jury*, as they are styled—Claude Gueux was condemned to death.

At the very onset several of them were much impressed with the name of *Gueux* (vagabond), and that had influenced their decision.

When the verdict was pronounced, Claude simply said:

"Very well; but there are two questions these gentlemen have not answered. Why did this man steal? What made him a murderer? They have not answered these two questions."

Returned to the prison, he made a good supper that night, exclaiming,

"Thirty-six years have now passed me!"

He refused to make any appeal until the last minute, but at the instance of one of the sisters who had nursed him he consented to do so. It seems he put her off too long, as she arrived with his petition when the legal limit of three days had expired by a few minutes.

When the poor girl informed him of this, she in her fullness of heart gave him a five-franc piece. He took the money and thanked her.

Whilst awaiting his turn, his fellow-prisoners were devoted to him, as we have already noticed, and placed all the means at their disposal to help him to escape.

They threw into his dungeon, through the air-hole, a nail, some wire, the handle of a pail—any one of these would have been enough for a man like Claude to free himself from his chains; he gave them up to the warder.

On the 8th of June, 1832, seven months and four days after the murder, the sentence arrived *pede claudo*, on that day the recorder of the court came, and Claude was told he had but one hour more to live.

His appeal had been rejected.

“Indeed,” said Claude, coolly; “I slept well last night, and doubtless I shall pass my next even better.”

It seems that strong men always speak with a certain grandeur on the approach of death.

First came the priest, then the executioner. He was humble to the priest, and listened to him with great attention, regretting much that he had not had the benefit of religious training; at the same time blaming himself for much in the past.

He was courteous in his manner to the executioner; in fact he gave up all—his soul to the priest, his body to the executioner.

Whilst his hair was being cut, some one mentioned how the cholera was spreading, and Troyes at any moment might become a prey to this fearful scourge.

“As for me,” said Claude, with a smile—“there is one thing to be said, I have no fear of the cholera.”

He had broken half of the scissors; what remained he asked the jailer to give to Albin—the other half lay buried in his chest. He also wished that that day’s rations be taken to his friend.

The only trifle he retained was the five-franc piece that the sister had given him, which he kept in his right hand after he was bound.

At a quarter to eight, the dismal procession usual in such cases left the prison. Pale, but with a firm tread, Claude Gueux slowly mounted the scaffold, keeping his eyes fixed on the crucifix the priest carried—an emblem of the

Saviour's suffering. He wished to embrace the priest and the executioner, thanking the one and pardoning the other. The executioner *gently* repulsed him.

Just before he was bound to the hideous machine he gave the five-franc piece to the priest, saying:

"For the poor."

As eight o'clock was striking at this moment, the noise of the bells drowned his voice, and the confessor answered that he had not understood him. Claude waited for an interval between two strokes and repeated calmly:

"For the poor."

The clock had scarcely struck its eight chimes, when this noble, and intelligent head fell.

A market-day had been chosen for the time of execution. The guillotine that day remained, inflaming the imagination of the mob to that extent that one of the tax-gatherers was nearly murdered: such is the admirable effect of public executions.

We have given the history of Claude Gueux's life, more to solve a difficult problem than for aught else, because we believe all the paragraphs of this story would answer for the headings of chapters in a work concerning the grand problem of the people of the nineteenth century.

In his life there are two questions to be considered. Before his fall, and after his fall. What was his training, and what was the penalty? This must interest society generally, for this man was well gifted, his instincts were good: then what was wanting?

This man was, certainly, well-born, well-organized, well-trained. What was wanting?

On this resolves the grand problem which would place society on a firm basis. *What nature has commenced in the individual, let society carry out.*

Look at Claude Gueux. An intelligent and most noble-hearted man, placed in the midst of evil surroundings, he turned thief. Society placed him in a prison where the evil was yet greater, and he ended with becoming a murderer.

He? Was he culpable?

Or ourselves?

Questions which require deep thought, or the result will be that we shall be compelled to shirk this most important subject.

With the facts before us, if the government gives no thought to the matter, what are the rulers about?

The Chambers are yearly much occupied. It is important to sift sinecures and to unravel the budget; to pass an act which compels me, disguised as a soldier, to mount guard at the

door of M. le Comte de Lobau, whom I do not know, and to whom I wish to remain a stranger; or to go on parade in the Square Marigny under the command of my grocer, who has been made an officer.¹

Deputies or ministers, it is important we should sound every subject, even though it end in nothing, to question and cross-question what we know but little about. Rulers and legislators, you pass your time in classical comparisons that would make a village school-master smile. You assert that it is the habits of modern civilization that have engendered adultery, incest, parricide, infanticide, and poisoning—proving that you know little of Jocasta, Phedra, Œdipus, Medea, or Rodo-guna. The great orators occupy themselves in lengthy discussions on Corneille and Racine, and get so heated in literary argument as to make the grossest mistakes in the French language.

Very important indeed all this is, but we consider there are subjects of far greater consequence.

In the midst of such useless arguments, what answer would the deputies give if one rose and gravely addressed them in the following words:

“Silence, all those who have been speaking, silence I say! You consider yourself

acquainted with the question: you know nothing about it."

The question is this: Scarcely a year ago, in the name of justice, a man at Pamiers was cut to pieces; at Dijon a woman's head was taken off; in Paris, at the Barrier Saint-Jacques, executions take place without number.

This is the question! Now take your time to consider it.

You, you who argue over the buttons of the national guard, whether they should be white or yellow, and if *security* is preferable to *certainty*!

Gentlemen of the Right, gentlemen of the Left, the great mass of the people suffer!

Whether a republic or a monarchy, the fact remains the same—the people suffer!

The people are famished, the people are frozen. Such misery leads them on to crime: according to sex, the galleys take the sons, houses of ill-fame the daughters. You have too many convicts, too many prostitutes.

That the social body has vice in its blood. What is the meaning of these two ulcers?

You are near the patient: treat the malady.

You are at fault: now study the matter more deeply. When you pass laws, what are they but expedients and palliatives? One-half your codes result from routine, the other half from empiricism.

Branding but cauterizes the wound, and it mortifies, and what is the end? You stamp the crime for life on the criminal; you make two friends of them, two companions—inseparables!

The galleys are a blister which spreads far worse matter than ever it extracts; and as for the sentence of death, when carried out it is a barbarous amputation.

Therefore, branding, penal servitude, and sentence of death are all of one class; you have done away with the branding, banish the rest.

Why keep the chain and the chopper now you have put aside the hot iron? Farinace was atrocious, but he was not absurd.

Take down that worn ladder that leads to crime and to suffering. Revise your laws; revise your codes; rebuild your prisons; replace your judges. Make laws suited to the present time.

Gentlemen, you are bent on economy; do not be so lavish in taking off the heads of so many during the year.

Since you are so set on suppressions, suppress the executioner; you could defray the expenses of six hundred schoolmasters with the wages you give your eighty executioners.

Consider the people; then there would be schools for the children, workshops for the men.

Do you know that in France there are fewer people who know how to read than in any other country in Europe? What! Switzerland can read, Belgium can read, Denmark can read, Greece can read, Ireland can read—and France cannot! It is a shame.

Go into the galleys, examine each one of these condemned men, and you will observe by the profile, the shape of the head, how many could find their type in the lower animals. Here are the lynx, the cat, the monkey, the vulture, the hyena. Nature was first to blame, no doubt; but the want of training fostered the evil.

Then give the people a fair education, and what there is of good in these ill-conditioned minds, let that be developed.

Nations must be judged by their opportunities.

Rome and Greece were educated: then brighten the people's intellect.

When France can read, then give the people encouragement for higher things. Ignorance is preferable to a little ill-directed knowledge; and remember, there is a book of far greater importance than the *Compère Mathieu*, more popular than the *Constitutionnel*, and more worthy of perusal than the charter of 1830—the Bible. And here a word of explanation.

Whatever you may do for the people, the majority will always remain poor and unhappy. Theirs the work, the heavy burden to carry, to endure.

Look in the scales ; all the miseries for the poor, all the pleasures for the rich, the two are not equal. The scales should not cheat and the State should not aid in cheating the weaker and helpless side.

In the midst of all this wretchedness, if you but throw hope in the balance, let the poor man learn there is a heaven where joy reigns, a paradise that he can share, and you raise him ; he feels that he has a part in the rich man's joys.

This was the teaching of Jesus, who knew more about it than Voltaire.

Then give to these people who work, and who suffer here, the hope of a different world to come.

They will be calm and patient. For patience but follows in the footsteps of hope.

Then spread the Gospel in all our villages, let every cottage have its Bible ; each book and each field thus sown will soon produce moral works.

The heads of the people, that is the point ! They are full of useful germs. Encourage in them virtue, and from that will spring so much that now lies fallow.

The man turned assassin under certain circumstances, if differently influenced would have served his country well.

Cultivate the heads of the people ; improve the masses, enlighten them, guard their morals, make them useful, and to such heads as those you will not be required to use cold steel.

NOTES

The following letter, found in the office of the *Revue de Paris*, in which *Claude Gueux* first appeared, does such great honor to our author that we give it here.

DUNKERQUE, 30 July, 1834.

To the Director of the *Revue de Paris*.

Claude Gueux, by Victor Hugo, which appeared in your issue of the 6th instant, is a grand lesson; aid me, I pray, in taking advantage of it.

Do me the favor, I pray, of printing as many copies of it as there are deputies in France, and send a copy to each and every one of them.

I have the honor to salute you,

CHARLES CARLIER, *Broker*.

¹ It goes without saying that we have no intention of here attacking the quite useful town patrol, which guards our streets, doors and firesides; but the parade, the pompom, the vainglory, and military uproar, ridiculous things, which only serve to make the citizen a parody of the soldier.

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